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Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Volume I

Grace V. Bird

LEADER IN JUNIOR COLLEGE EDUCATION AT BAKERSFIELD
AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

With an Introduction by
Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr.

An Interview Conducted by
Ralda Sullivan

Copy No. 1

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GRACE BIRD
(c. 1951)

Portrait by Luke Gibney
Photograph by Al Noriega



Grace Van Dyke Bird

Grace Van Dyke Bird died Friday, Sept. 5.

She was 94. She had been in the Health Unit of the Lake Park Retirement Residence for the past 16 months.

Bird was born in Salt Lake City and graduated from UC-Berkeley in 1914. She was a member of Sigma Kappa sorority and Phi Beta Kappa. Following her graduation she became a teacher at Bakersfield High School; in 1920 was given the Deanship of Bakersfield Junior College and subsequently became the first woman to become head of a public California Community College.

The library at Bakersfield College bears her name.

Bird was also the first woman to serve as a Commissioner of the Central California Junior College Athletic Conference.

In 1950 Robert Gordon Sproul appointed her as associate director of the Office of Relations with Schools — a position which she held until her retirement in 1960.

In 1976 her Alma Mater named her a Berkeley Fellow.

Bird is survived by a number of nieces, nephews and grand nieces and nephews.

Her favorite charity was the Save-the-Redwoods-League.



Grace Van Dyke Bird

Grace Bird, ex-dean at BC, dies at age 94

Grace Bird, a petite woman who inspired high academic standards for a fledgling Bakersfield College, died Friday evening in Oakland at the age of 94.

Miss Bird had held several titles during her 25-year tenure as head of the college. Even though the position of president was not created until she had left BC, she was granted the title of president emerita when she retired.

During the 1920s and '30s, Miss Bird was the only woman to be dean of a California college.

Turn to B1C

BIRD: Former BC dean dies

Continued from B1
college, said Ed Simonsen, retired chancellor of the Kern Community College District.

Simonsen was among a team of scholars that organized an oral history about Miss Bird and her contributions to education; a two-volume collection housed in the University of California Bancroft Library.

Miss Bird was a native of Salt Lake City. She graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a degree in architecture, but was recruited in 1917 to teach French in what was then the joint Kern high and junior college district.

She soon moved into administration. In 1921, she was put in charge of the college and was eventually named dean.

In 1950, she left Bakersfield and

returned to UC Berkeley, where she studied and guided the relationship between the university and community colleges.

By then, however, she had set in concrete her mark on Bakersfield.

During World War II, she published a newsletter that was sent to "friends of the college" stationed around the world — a project that built support for BC after the war.

While she encouraged students to take vocational classes, Miss Bird also built professional programs that began students on the track to a four-year degree.

Come graduation, she acknowledged the accomplishments of each student without the benefit of notes.

The BC library was named after Miss Bird, and she made annual trips to the college until about five years ago.

Miss Bird was a woman with a small stature "but carried a wallop," Simonsen said. "She was really a strong woman.

"She was a woman whose whole life was her profession."



Grace Bird

Sept. 5, 1986

GRACE VAN DYKE BIRD

Grace Van Dyke Bird died Friday, September 5, at the age of 94. She had been in the Health Unit of the Lake Park Retirement Residence for the past sixteen months.

Miss Bird graduated from the University of California in the class of 1914. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and of Sigma Kappa Sorority. Following her graduation she became a teacher at Bakersfield High School; in 1920 she was made Dean of Bakersfield Junior College and subsequently became the first woman to become head of a public California Community College. The library at Bakersfield College bears her name.

Miss Bird was also the first woman to serve as a Commissioner of the Central California Junior College Athletic Conference.

In 1950 President Robert Gordon Sproul appointed her as Associate Director of the Office of Relations With Schools at the University of California, Berkeley, a position which she held until her retirement in 1960.

In 1976 her Alma Mater named her a Berkeley Fellow.

Miss Bird is survived by a number of neices, nephews, and grand-neices and nephews.

Services will be private. Miss Bird's favorite charity was the Save-the-Redwoods League.

Submitted by her niece Virginia Sterling Rothwell
P.O.Box 250
Inverness, CA 94937

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INTRODUCTION

When I came into the junior college field in 1946 I was anxious to become acquainted with the leaders in the field. I needed a sound introduction to the philosophy of these institutions and some ideas about the promising directions for their development. One of the first persons I met was Grace Bird, then serving as chief executive officer of Bakersfield College. I liked her views. They were positive, and "upbeat." She was one of the first to teach me that the institutions we worked with were not "junior" to anything - they were institutions of worth in their own right. In those days not many people had that approach. Too many were insistent upon taking their signals from the four-year colleges and universities with the thought that this would assure full transferability of credits. Grace's view was that the junior college experience ought to be of value in itself, not necessarily just preparatory to another level of education.

She continued to carry that conviction as she moved to the University of California with responsibility for relations with schools, including the junior colleges. Under her wise tutelage there evolved the notion of a peer relationship among the community colleges and the university rather than a superiority-inferiority relationship. Follow-up studies with regard to the transfer success of junior college students gave tangible evidence of the validity of her views. Very soon her influence moved far beyond the boundaries of California to have effect upon registrars and admissions officers throughout California and in many of the other states where junior colleges were developing in significant numbers.

So much that we take for granted today in the understanding and acceptance of community colleges was novel and often difficult a generation ago. Grace Bird was one of the wise foundation builders. She not only influenced an educational movement but she touched the lives of many who later had privileges of leadership. I am among those and I am grateful.

Dr. Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr.
President
American Association of
Community and Junior Colleges

25 April 1978

INTERVIEW HISTORY

As the first woman to be chief executive officer of a junior college, Bakersfield College in California, Grace Bird has become something of a legend as a trailblazer in state and nation-wide education circles. In her subsequent career at the University of California as Associate Director of the Office of Relations with Schools, she made significant contributions to the university's relationships with the junior and state colleges. We knew that we at the Regional Oral History Office should interview her.

In April, 1975 Jim Kantor, University Archivist, spurred us on by recommending that she be interviewed not only for her achievements in education but for her knowledge of the Porter Garnett circle and other notable friendships, for as Garnett's literary executor Miss Bird had given his papers to The Bancroft Library. This reinforced the strong recommendation we had received earlier from Wofford B. Camp, whose memoir has been done by the Regional Oral History Office and who offered to help with funding. At his suggestion we turned to Dr. Edward Simonsen, Chancellor of Kern Community College District who formed a committee and organized a fund drive with high effectiveness through the Bakersfield Foundation. Friends, relatives, colleagues and members of the Bakersfield community responded warmly and generously in appreciation of Miss Bird's contribution to Bakersfield. By June, 1976 Miss Bird had agreed to begin the interviews and after I had done some research, we met at her apartment for an initial planning session.

TIME AND SETTING OF THE INTERVIEWS:

We met for nine sessions, always in the morning, in Miss Bird's elegant and immaculate apartment, surrounded by a pleasing array of beautiful art objects, many of them gifts from friends and admirers. There were four meetings in July, 1976 on the 6th, 16th, 19th and 26th during which we covered her childhood and student days at the University of California, the beginning of her career at Bakersfield College, problems, goals and techniques of junior college administration, and changes at Bakersfield College during the Depression and World War II.

After vacation in August we resumed for the remaining five sessions on September 17th and met on the 22nd, the 29th of September and on October 5th and 11th, stopping in time for Miss Bird to begin her usual elaborate preparations for Christmas. To consider it important to set aside time to lovingly and imaginatively prepare for a social occasion, not counting the cost to herself, was characteristic of Miss Bird.

In the last set of interviews, we had discussed her work at the University of California as Associate Director of the Office of Relations with Schools, her leadership in state and national junior college organizations and others concerned with education, honors received, and had moved on to her friendship with the Porter Garnetts and other friends with interesting digressions on such subjects as women's roles, young people today, language, and the discipline of children.

CONDUCT OF THE INTERVIEWS:

Before each session I gave Miss Bird a list of the topics I planned to cover and for most meetings she prepared some questions, often with her answers outlined, that should be included. At times the spontaneity of the conversational mode customary in the oral history process was jarring to Miss Bird's sense of orderly discourse. Yet, raconteur and conversationalist extraordinaire that she is, she would follow the associative process into delightful by-ways of thought and opinion that also provided useful information for cultural history, if not the field of education. Despite a hearing problem, Miss Bird was always ready to respond fully and accurately to questions.

Before and after each one and one-half- to two-hour tape recording session, Miss Bird shared many affectionate recollections and memorabilia of the people, place, and time discussed. So many of her comments were memorable, that I found myself Boswell-like taking notes. Once she said that she hoped that her memoir would show that "affection's worth it;" another time she explained that one question she asked herself in hiring a teacher was did he have a "happy heart?" That is, did that person have the capacity to be happy without any good reason for being so.

EDITING:

After transcripts of each session were typed, I edited them for accuracy, clarity, and continuity, wrote chapter headings, and prepared a table of contents for each section. By July, 1977 Miss Bird had received the entire manuscript of nearly 400 pages.

She felt that the manuscript did not follow as orderly an organizational pattern as she would have liked and, despite my assurances that much of what she considered digressive or inappropriate was significant for cultural history, she was concerned that we had sometimes rambled too far afield from the main subject of her career in education. Thus, after accepting the first 35 pages with minor changes for accuracy and clarity, she took on the monumental task of rewriting the entire manuscript in her tiny yet legible handwriting on legal-size lined yellow tablets. The recalcitrant pages were whipped into a stricter adherence to chronological order, some sections expanded and others deleted. Many of those comments and digressions of Miss Bird's that I had treasured were swept into the wastebasket. Yet, the conversational form had been kept by adapting the interviewer's questions or writing new ones to lead into the answers provided.

The final manuscript, more highly polished than is usual for an oral history memoir, is about half the size of the original transcript. It is a tribute to Miss Bird's love of order, her sense of what is appropriate, and her capacity for indefatigable work.

In October, 1977 I received and reviewed the rewritten interview, checking it for continuity and conformity to the Regional Oral History Office manuscript style, and altering in places the wording of questions ascribed to me.

Since I had clearly become one of Miss Bird's circle of friends and admirers over the course of the year, when the editing was finished, as friends we celebrated the occasion at dinner.

Working with Miss Bird, has been an opportunity to observe a highly intelligent woman who was outstanding as an administrator because she cared about people and identified with the organization to which she devoted her energies. The unique blend of qualities that made for her success is explained in a way Miss Bird was too modest to do by her Bakersfield friends and colleagues in Volume II, Bakersfield Remembers Grace V. Bird. Thus the two volumes complement each other to provide a memoir of one who "loved and was imbued by the qualities of what is fine in living and in art and in education."*

Ralda Sullivan
Interviewer-Editor

20 April 1978
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

* Frank Wattron, Volume II, Bakersfield Remembers Grace V. Bird, 1978.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY -- Grace V. Bird

Born January 14, 1892 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, Class of 1914 with majors in architecture, French and education. Participated in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities including serving as Porter Garnett's assistant in the Partheneia of 1915. Began a life-long friendship with Porter and Edna Garnett, Witter Bynner, Hildegard Flanner and others.

Hired in 1917 as a teacher at Bakersfield High School. In 1920 named Dean of Bakersfield Junior College, and served as chief executive officer until 1950. Achieved a state and nation-wide reputation as a leader in junior college education. Also active in Bakersfield community activities.

In 1950 joined the University of California as associate director of the Office of Relations with Schools and served until her retirement in 1960.

Many honors. Among them -- named a Berkeley Fellow of the University in 1976.

I FAMILY BACKGROUND

RS: Miss Bird, will you start by telling where and when you were born?

Bird: I was born in Salt Lake City on the fourteenth of January, 1892. It's quite a wonderful feeling to have been born in the nineteenth century and living this long into the twentieth. I have one rather interesting incident about my birth, which I learned after I was grown. The doctor was at the theater--he had been to a formal dinner party followed by the theater--and was in white tie and tails when he delivered me.

RS: An appropriate way of bringing you into the world.

Bird: I always felt that it gave my ordinary birth a little air of pomp.

RS: Were you born at home?

Bird: I was born at home; almost nobody in that day went to the hospital to have a child.

RS: And in what order of the children in your family did you come?

Bird: I was the last of six children born to my father and mother in Salt Lake City. My father had had two sons by his first wife, Fannie Canby, who died in 1875. She had been his neighborhood sweetheart in Wilmington, Delaware where the Birds and the Canbys lived not far apart. The two sons were grown then and married by the time I was born.

Father's Family History--The Birds of Delaware

RS: Tell us about your parents, who they were, what their pursuits were.

Bird: Since both my parents came from English stock, I suppose one could say that I am truly an Anglo-American. My father [William Harold Bird] came from a family whose roots went back very far in English history. As a matter of fact, a British genealogist, who studied the early history for us some years ago, discovered that the first identified member of the family from whom we descended was William Bird of County Cumberland living in 1295.

It is believed that the particular Bird family from whom I am descended originated in London before the thirteenth century. The earliest officially identified member, however, lived in Cumberland and Chester Counties. The privilege of having a coat of arms had been granted in Chester County in the time of Edward III in the fourteenth century. We were not of the nobility, but apparently we were a family of enough service to the king to be granted the privilege by the crown to have a coat of arms.

I must add a footnote by telling that a few years ago while examining the catalogue of a dealer in rare books, I came upon the listing of a facsimile of The Vale Royall of England or The County Palatine of Chester printed in 1656. I think the ghost of one of my ancestors living then must have put my pen in my hand, for I found myself writing a check and ordering the facsimile. When it came, here were the Birds, my Birds, many of them, who had been identified by the genealogist, James Matthews. There was William Bird, mayor of Chester in 1558, the year Elizabeth became queen, and there was his son (also William) who was mayor in 1580. And there were several more.

RS: That was Shakespeare's time.

Bird: Yes, and I have often wondered if the outburst of creative writing of that time permeated the lives of my people in Chester. Did they sense what a magnificent and permanent beauty was being given to their common tongue?

RS: Who came to America? How far back was that?

Bird: The first Bird of our family to come to America received a grant of land from the Duke of York (later King James II) in what was then called the Lower Counties of Pennsylvania in 1680. The grant was called a patent, and it lay in part of what is now Delaware. Some of the original land remained in the family until the death of a

- Bird: cousin in the early 1940's. Today we are within three years of celebrating the three hundredth anniversary of our arrival in America.
- RS: Your father's family has been very much a part of the history of this country. How about your mother's family?
- Bird: My mother's family also came from England. My mother was born in Leeds, Yorkshire County in 1857. It was really not the city of Leeds in my grandmother's time but one of the small communities surrounding it named Headlington. It was later absorbed by Leeds.
- RS: Would you say something about how it was that your mother and your father arrived in Salt Lake City, starting with your father?
- Bird: My father was born April 5, 1840 in what was called Christiana Hundred in Wilmington, Delaware. His father, James Thomas Bird, was a farmer and landholder. His mother was Elizabeth Kettle Clark, a member of another pioneer Delaware family. My father graduated from Lawrenceville Preparatory School and entered Princeton to study law, but the Civil War interrupted his schooling as it did the schooling of so many here in World War I and World War II.
- RS: Before we go on with that, tell me about the Grace Van Dyke you were named after.
- Bird: My great-grandmother's name was Grace Van Dyke.
- RS: Was Grace Van Dyke a woman of distinguished character that has been talked of in the family?
- Bird: Our records rarely tell us anything about the women of a family. She was the daughter of Isaac Van Dyke who owned a prosperous plantation named "Berwick". Her mother was named Elizabeth Kettle. After her father, Isaac Van Dyke, died, when Grace was a small child, her grandfather, Cornelius Kettle, was made her guardian. The Cornelius Kettle home in New Castle is a Delaware state landmark, and part of it is believed to have been built in 1690.
- The members of the Van Dyke family to which Isaac belonged are a notable family in Delaware history. One of them, Nicholas Van Dyke, served in the Continental Congress before the separation from England, and he was a leading member of the group who drew up the constitution for Delaware when it was admitted as the second state to the new nation. We cannot guess, of course, what role Isaac might have played had he lived.
- RS: Was there a history of women who were active in civic affairs and education in your father's family?

Family Pictures



Grace Bird's Father,
William Harold Bird
ca. 1902, age 62



Grace Bird's Mother
Laura Lapish Bird, January, 1877
age 19



Grace V. Bird
age - about 30



"Quincy Place"
Bird Family home in Delaware

Bird: If they were, it is not the sort of thing mentioned in the old records I have examined. Their main obligation was to bear and bring up children, for they with their husbands were colonizers wanting to build up populations. The records do refer to their church work and their charities.

Well, since this oral history is being related by a person dedicated to faith in education, I should like to mention that my Bird grandparents and parents shared that faith. My father's two eldest brothers inherited the farm and ran it as grower and manager. Of the others one was an early graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, Dr. James Clark Bird; two became lawyers, Levi Clark Bird of Harvard and my father of Princeton; one graduated from West Point and rose to the rank of General [Charles Bird].

Although the two sisters studied only things of grace (art, music, etc.) they married men in the professions because of compatibility as well as love. Mary Louisa married a publisher who later became General Levi Clark Bootes. Susan married Dr. Robert Johnson.

RS: You have mentioned that your father's education was interrupted by the Civil War. Did his family have any strong abolitionist sentiment or any strongly held views on the issues of the Civil War?

Bird: Oh, yes. They all believed the nation should be held together as one nation indivisible. They were also abolitionists. Four of the sons went to war on the side of the Union. I would say that there's been evidence throughout the recorded information about our family that a liberal point of view has always been characteristic of it. This was true of my Grandfather [James] Bird who, living in Delaware long before the Civil War, never had slaves. His workers were always free men.

When my father recruited his own cavalry unit for fighting in the Civil War, two were black free men who worked on the farm, my grandfather's employees. They joined my father's cavalry unit, not as horsemen but as orderlies. One of these performed a great service to my father and to his family. My father was seriously wounded at the Battle of Cold Harbor, and the doctors had about determined that they would have to amputate his leg. The black man, who had been one of his companions on the ranch, stood in the path of the operation, insisted that my father's father be brought to the hospital first. This was then done, and my father's leg was saved though he carried a cane long after I was born. When he was carrying a cane I thought it was only for the jaunty effect, but he said it had become a part of him.

RS: When he came west, he came west to seek his fortune, and he was employed by the railroad, was he not?

Bird: I'm not sure it was to make a fortune so much as to find out if he wanted to establish a law practice and home in the west. His job on the railroad would help him decide.

RS: What railroad was it?

Bird: The Union Pacific. He had been appointed superintendent of the building of the railroad as far as Laramie, Wyoming from Omaha. It was about 1866 or '67.

RS: Did he tell you any of his recollections of working for the railroad?

Bird: He had many, of course. The most dramatic one was one that's too good to be true, and I suppose could easily be used in a television program about the old west. He was in charge, as the superintendent, of the payroll; this was cash shipped directly by the railroad from Omaha. There were bandits, of course, tough men of the west. Before the money arrived, my father had been tipped off to the effect that there might be a bandit there to take the money. Well, there was not only one bandit; there were four or five at the station. My father had gone alone to receive the payload. The bandits were hiding in the neighborhood, except for two, the leader and one other. They approached my father, without saying anything, but just waiting for the train to pull in. As it came nearer, my father thought that he'd better be ready for something, and so he appealed to the leader by saying that the train was bringing the money to pay off the men who were working on the railroad. And he said, "There's just no other source for this money except what's coming in now, and if you men take it, the rest of these people are going to be hungry." The bandit called off the hold-up; my father took the money and returned to the offices of the railroad.

RS: He must have been a very persuasive man.

Bird: Persuasive or brave. Who knows what influenced the leader? We've always thought that this story was almost too "corny" to be true, but several years later, when the man was caught and about to be hung, although given a trial first, he said that he had once done a good deed and was there no room for excuse in that one good deed? So my father sent word that he had performed it and offered to testify, but Laramie did not wait and the man was hung anyway.

RS: Well, that's a very interesting story of the old west. Then how did your father finally settle in Salt Lake City?

Bird: My father had moved west with the railroad, but he now renewed his law studies.

- RS: Excuse me, what years are we talking about? The late 1860's?
- Bird: Probably 1866 or 1867. I can't quite recall the actual year that my father first came to Salt Lake, if I ever knew. It was probably 1867.
- RS: That is close enough.
- Bird: But he did settle in Salt Lake and he did establish himself in law. He went back to Delaware to marry a young woman whom he had known almost from boyhood, who belonged to the Canby family. He brought her back; they had two children. By now he was fairly well established in Salt Lake City.

I know a little about it only because I have been able to read some old newspapers of that time and there learned that the Birds were well known in the city. My father was one of the founders of St. Mark's Episcopal Church. I believe the church is still standing and still one of the very nice church buildings in Salt Lake City.

- RS: Did he come from an Episcopalian family?
- Bird: No. He came from a strict Presbyterian family and, in a way, slightly resented the strictness; as a free soul he wanted the right of free choice. When he made it, he made it for the Episcopal Church.

Mother's Family History--Mormon Pioneers

- RS: And then, how did your father and mother meet?
- Bird: In the early days of the first Mrs. Bird's coming to Salt Lake City my father had formed a friendship with a woman named Lapish, Hannah Lapish, my mother's mother; she was quite a remarkable woman in the Mormon Church. He was a great admirer of hers, and he had taken a legal case for her against the Utah state railroad over some property on which the railroad had trespassed without her permission. This cemented their friendship and Hannah became close friends with the Bird family. She came to love Fannie Canby Bird very much. This is the way in which my father first met my mother after the death of his wife, Fannie Canby Bird, in 1875.

You see, while we were talking about my background, we were talking chiefly about the Birds, and not about my mother's family. Unlike the Birds, her parents were not from a privileged family in England. They had no coat of arms; they were no landholders as the

RS: How old was she?

Bird: Not quite nineteen.

RS: And how soon after that did they emigrate to America and why?

Bird: They continued to live in England where Joseph was working and where they continued to have relationships of a spiritual nature with the Mormons now established in England to help the new missionaries and new converts. They had a child born in 1857, my mother.

RS: What was your mother's name?

Bird: My mother's name was Laura Jane Lapish. When she was six or seven weeks old, her parents brought her by boat to America in response to the religious urge they felt for joining with the Mormon migration. Hannah was not yet twenty-three. Joseph was twenty-seven.

RS: Had they heard a call from Brigham Young in Utah?

Bird: Yes, through the missionaries. The Mormon Church was at that time helping enormously the people who wanted to come into the United States to join the church, to be part of the church which is officially named the Church of the Latter Day Saints. So while I do not know whether boats were actually chartered, the church helped all those people who wanted to sail to America and follow the Mormon religion. This meant that often the majority of those on shipboard were coming because of seeking to settle in an area with the Mormons.

The Church of Latter Day Saints based on the revelations of Joseph Smith was founded in 1830. The first converts were from within the United States, but it was not long before missionaries were in England and other north European countries. Before 1846, the flow was on. My grandparents sailed from England May 30, 1857 on the ship, The Tuscarora.

RS: Do you know what the appeal of Mormonism was for your grandmother and grandfather?

Bird: She always insisted that she believed devoutly and completely in the faith as it was preached. This meant, therefore, that she believed that the founder of the church had had revelations. My grandfather also always insisted that he believed it. But the life she practiced showed that her great devotion, her greatest devotion, seemed to be to those practices of the Mormons which were of the highest ethical standards.

Bird: She believed that man should help man, that those who had should help those who did not have, that those who needed sustenance of a spiritual or physical nature should receive it from those who possessed it. And her life, which was long, meant that she was always one of the most active members of the Relief Society of the Mormon Church up to the end of her life.

RS: Would you tell something about her involvement in community affairs?

Bird: I should like to tell about it because this is part of the honing to a sharp edge of the mind and life of a very interesting and intelligent woman. I have already said that she and Joseph with their baby Laura (my mother) sailed from England May 30, 1857. They reached Philadelphia at the time of the great panic of that year. There was no employment in Philadelphia, so Joseph went to Richmond, Virginia where there was work for him. Grandmother stayed alone with the little baby in Philadelphia.

RS: How did she manage economically?

Bird: She knew the money she had wouldn't be enough without earning something to supplement it. She discovered there was a knitting factory in Philadelphia that needed employees to do the final sewing. She could do this at home while bringing up her child. Presto! She bought a sewing machine and sewed for the knitting factory in her home. By then Joseph had steady work in Richmond and sent for his wife and baby. Hannah and Laura and the sewing maching joined him. Two years later they had a second child, born on little Laura's birthday. The child was named Emily Virginia, Virginia for the state in which she was born.

It was while they were in Richmond, and not very long after the birth of her second baby, that the slavery issue began boiling over and John Brown's raid occurred at Harper's Ferry in October, 1859. It looked as if war might break out at any moment. Brigham Young, established in Utah where the church was to find its real home, sent one of his emissaries named Cannon, later a bishop of the church, to urge that the converts who had come over from England, and all other new Mormon groups, move west. They heeded this call, and the Lapishes, now four in number, went to Missouri where the Mormons were gathering.

RS: How did they get to Missouri?

Bird: By railroad, and there in Missouri they gathered for the trek to Utah. The wagon trains had been going to Salt Lake City for the gathering of Zion since 1846, but since 1856 the church had not equipped wagon trains. Instead it was now furnishing handcarts which could be pushed and pulled the thousand miles from the Missouri River to Salt Lake City across plains, rivers, and the Rocky Mountains, all on foot except for the provision wagons.

Bird: Grandmother and Grandfather joined one of those handcart groups with their little girls, Laura a few months past three and Emily a little over a year old. They piled such belongings as they still had saved into the cart and placed the children in comfort on the bedding. Neither adult was a large person. Grandfather was short and wiry. Grandmother was not only a small person but small boned. Yet courage and their faith took them on.

Of many incidents en route they had one that was too nice not to tell. The company was running low on food. Grandmother had some jewelry that had been in her family for some time. They were running so low on provisions that they didn't think they could finish the journey without more flour. Grandmother thought, "Well, I have some jewelry and nobody else seems to have anything," so when they came upon one of the little trading stores en route, similar to the isolated ones we see on television westerns today, she offered the owner the jewelry in exchange for flour. But the storekeeper was not interested. He simply wasn't going to do anything about it.

A trapper, or perhaps a miner, she didn't know which, but he was a tall man dressed in a buckskin suit, came up to her and said, "What is it that you're talking about?" So she showed him her two pieces of jewelry, long-saved heirlooms, and said, "These pieces of jewelry." He said, "What do you want for them?" To which she replied, "Seven hundred pounds of flour." The deal was completed and the flour lasted until they reached the Green River. The Green River was the last of the rivers to be crossed and Mormons from Salt Lake were there with provisions to get them the rest of the way.

RS: This was a handcart trek of how many people?

Bird: About 150 people, if I remember correctly. Some of the early handcart companies suffered near disaster from death and freezing. My grandparents' company, which now knew better how to make the trip because in 1860 it was one of the last to go. All together through the whole period, 1856-1860, four thousand people completed the trip by this means.

RS: Was Dan Robinson the leader of your grandparents' company?

Bird: Yes, he was the captain.

RS: So your grandparents literally walked a thousand miles to Salt Lake City?

Bird: That's right, from Florence, Nebraska across plains, rivers, and mountains.

RS: Pushing and pulling this handcart.

Bird: With their small children and belongings in it.

RS: And when they arrived in Salt Lake City, what circumstances did they find?

Bird: Well, when they arrived in Salt Lake City, there were different choices that people could make depending on what their interests were. The church already had information for them about what they might do, where they might go, and so on. Since it was almost essential that everybody do some farming, so that they could raise their own food, and their own stock for meat and milk, and so on, everybody did some farming, but not necessarily for the market.

Grandfather, having had a little more education than most of the rest of them and being of a scholarly bent, enjoyed writing. He was selected by Brigham Young, himself, to be a teacher. And this suited my grandfather's interests. He also wrote many of the legal documents for the church in the area in which they settled.

RS: Where did they settle?

Bird: They settled in the Lehigh Valley, which was south of Salt Lake, and on the edge of Utah Lake, the fresh water lake that feeds Great Salt Lake.

RS: Would you tell about your grandmother's life in Utah?

Bird: Between 1860 and 1868 she bore three children who lived and twin boys who died in infancy. Since she was a pioneer woman, her duties embraced all the responsibilities for the home, including making the children's clothes, nursing them in illness, keeping the kitchen garden--just everything. Her time was very limited for things outside her home until the children were older. She and Joseph worked together and continuously on their education.

RS: Was this in the home?

Bird: Yes. Grandmother was very interested in the whole business of each individual making his own choices out of life. She had been this way about her own religion, and she was this way about her children. She hoped they would grow in self-dependence and make the choices that they would want to make, but she wanted them to have an adequate background to know whether or not this would be a good choice over the long haul or a bad choice. She was very interested in seeing that all her children had a long and wide view and a broad education.

RS: How did she bring that about?

Bird: Primarily, of course, by the things she and Joseph were teaching in the home, for they were encouraging interest in the natural world about them and the ideas being talked about among adults and the meaning inside some of the stories they all read together.

Later, after the two eldest children, my mother and Aunt Emily, were approaching young womanhood, they were sent to a private school maintained by the Episcopal Church.

RS: Wasn't that unusual for Mormon children?

Bird: I don't know, but the upper level of the Mormon common school emphasis for girls was then on the domestic arts. My grandmother was interested in the education of a woman for the deep choices she might have to make when she herself was a mother. So she was more anxious that they have a broad education in history, know something about philosophy, know a good deal about the humanistic studies in arts and music. It would be a formal extension of what she and Joseph had been trying to do.

Grandmother felt, in her own heart, a great urge to help the whole community to make choices. This meant that she felt that women ought to have a right to help decide some of the community policy on the very highest level. As a result, she gave a course in civil government for women, and the local community was interested enough in having her teach it that they lent the courthouse to her to use for her class.

As a result of this kind of activity, when it came time for Utah to establish a constitution, she was selected by her community to represent them at the constitutional convention.

RS: What was the name of the community that she lived in?

Bird: At that time, she was in American Fork. But she had also, without giving a formal course, been instrumental in interesting the women in the whole Lehigh Valley in taking a larger part in the higher levels of government than just at the community level.

RS: How did she do that?

Bird: Through her activities with the women and through conferences with them because the Lehigh Valley did not have as organized a program as American Fork.

RS: Did she join any woman's suffrage organization?

Bird: At first she did not join a suffrage organization, but at the Utah constitutional convention she played a larger role in her advocacy of votes for women. There were other leading women in the Mormon Church who held the same idea. One of these, who was one of Brigham Young's numerous daughters, was a great leader in the field. Her name was Mrs. Zena Card Young.

But there were three or four women in Salt Lake City, which was the center of the state government, who were deeply interested in woman's suffrage. The Utah constitution proposed an article granting universal suffrage. And Grandmother was one of the advocates of this. Utah adopted universal suffrage in its own constitution in 1892, long before it was adopted by the United States constitution.

Grandmother was one of the women selected to be a delegate from Utah to the First International Congress for Woman's Suffrage held in Washington during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency--1902, I believe. Grandmother was, I suppose, without being aggressive about it, a new woman in an old world, because she thought that women should play a rather larger role in settling those policies which were to govern all people. She didn't think this should be left to men alone, but that all should play a part in it.

RS: Then your grandmother remained actively involved and interested in community life. She also shared a great deal with her son, who was a blind legislator. Can you tell us something about her subsequent career and her relationship with her son?

Bird: Grandmother's interest in the relationship between the laws and the way in which people lived was communicated to her son, Joseph. As a young boy Joseph had lost his sight following a serious illness of diphtheria. Grandmother had taken him to New York where an internationally famous German eye surgeon performed surgery on her son. Thereafter Joseph saw with one eye the difference between light and dark and a sufficient outline of objects so that he moved around the city with apparently complete freedom. He did use a cane. He continued to live with his mother for all of his life.

They were very close and from her he had a deep interest in the relation between people and government. Together they read all about every issue that was before the national government. Grandmother read aloud to him, and they had a beautiful relationship of the mind as well as the relationship of son to mother and mother to son.

One outcome of this was that he was elected to the Utah legislature and served one term that I know of and I think that it may have been two terms, but I was a little bit on the young side at nine [laughter] to remember.

RS: Your grandmother must have been very much involved with political issues all of that time that he was in office.

Bird: Well, she was always informed. She was the kind of person that my father always enjoyed meeting and his friends enjoyed meeting because she seemed to have both a man's and a woman's mind in her interests in life.

RS: So you had a very early model of a woman who took her place in the world.

Bird: Well, she was a very interesting woman and a very loving one; she had a very soft, gentle voice which was never raised. It was always, to me, a phenomenon that she could accomplish as much as she did without ever raising her voice. I'm reminded of being on the platform one time with David Starr Jordan at an educational meeting. Microphones weren't invented yet, and so we all had to enlarge our voices. He was mumbling so; I thought that something should be said. So, I whispered to him, "You have to say things quite loudly in this auditorium," to which he replied, "No one can shout and tell the truth." [Laughter.]

II GROWING UP IN SALT LAKE CITY

RS: Now your mother had a broad education because your grandmother believed in giving her one, didn't she?

Bird: Yes, but my grandfather had been nourishing her mind too. As an avid reader himself, he helped develop a love of reading in all his children. Mother became an enormous reader, and I often think that her education was always an ongoing thing because of this.

She and my father often read together after retiring. Mother was usually the reader. My small bedroom adjoined theirs, and when a little girl I often fell asleep, not to a lullaby but to the laughter induced in my parents by Bret Harte or Mark Twain, especially by Mark Twain's Old Times on the Mississippi.

And how they enjoyed the theater!

RS: Did you see many plays as you were growing up?

Bird: Before I was ten I had seen several of the more famous turn-of-the-century actors and actresses: Joe Jefferson, the most famous of all at that time in Rip Van Winkle; Maude Adams in The Little Minister, the first of the James Barrie plays in which she starred; and over the years that followed I probably saw all the others. I remember seeing Ethel Barrymore when she was still young in Cousin Kate and William Farnham in Ben Hur with the chariot race on a moving platform making such a noise as to create a sense of great speed.

Well, I had a more personal reason for being excited about seeing Ben Hur. My brother Scott and a group of his high school friends were called upon to be "extras" in the cast of plays when needed--you know, "spear carriers" and the like. I knew they were to be the "waves" in the shipwreck scene in Ben Hur. Their duty was to lie down on the floor in marked spots and push up in rhythm the blue tarpaulin painted sea which covered them. They did this

Bird: so vigorously the evening we were in the audience, they rocked the raft, and Mr. Farnham had to add a line to his part and shout above the storm machines, "I wish this sea would calm down."

RS: Did you have music too? The Mormon Tabernacle Choir is, of course, nationally famous today.

Bird: There was no such thing as broadcasting in those days, but the choir and organist gave concerts. We only went on special occasions. However we had musical events, for Salt Lake also supported a Light Opera Company which came over from San Francisco after its season there and spent six weeks with us. It presented The Mikado, Pinafore, or other Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and Robin Hood, and others of that nature.

And, of course, Salt Lake supported a resident theater stock company for twelve or sixteen weeks each year. We went to the Saturday matinees every week of the season.

And, oh, I saw and heard the historically famous Floradora Sextette. I remember nothing of the plot of Floradora, but I learned its most popular song from my sister's sheet music, and remember looking at my friend Marie Odell's father with new eyes when I learned he had attended every performance given of that light opera in Salt Lake.

RS: Well, you had a rich exposure to the theater. Now, I wonder if you would tell about the other children in the family and about your life at home?

Bird: I was the last of six children in the family: two sisters (Fannie and Laura), three brothers (Harold, Scott-Elliott, William), and Grace. There is about a fifteen-year difference between the eldest and the youngest in the family. There were many days when the family had large family gatherings to which my Grandmother Lapish and Uncle Joe would come and, occasionally, some members of the Bird family would come out from Delaware to spend a month with us.

The house was always full of people because the family believed that if the children had their friends in our house or yard, it would be better for our children. And so, by and large, we always had a small, maybe six-man, football team in the back yard, or a four-man, five-man baseball team going, because we always had two or three to start it.

RS: Did you participate in the games?

Bird: I was usually called on to play. I never was anything like a quarterback in the football games. I was usually a lineman because the quarterbacks and the halfbacks had all the fun. They

- Bird: did all the running and made all the noise. And I don't think I ever pitched in more than one or two baseball games; I was always an outfielder who chased balls, but this was because I was the little one who could be bossed more easily. This bred humility of a sort.
- RS: Were you what we would call a tomboy as a child?
- Bird: No. I was never thought of as a tomboy. I was what in the theater we always called "others in the cast."
- RS: [Laughter.] Well, it sounds as if you grew up being very comfortable with boys. Will you tell about the school you went to and what you were interested in and whether you were active in athletics?
- Bird: Well, I was not active in sports anywhere except in our own backyard, but I was a good, if not ardent, spectator of sports. I was beginning to fall a little in love with tennis, which I was learning to play.
- I went to an elementary school named as most everything is in Utah for an Indian tribe, the Oquirrh School. The Oquirrhrs were a tribe within the Utes who were part of the Shoshones. An interesting thing about the school, which I did not know at the time was unusual, was that in a one-through-eighth grade campus different teachers taught the different subjects we studied in the seventh and eighth grades. Salt Lake was pioneering in what later became the junior high school.
- In answer to your question about my particular interests at that time, I can quickly reply that there were two. When quite small, it was the nearly inseparable companionship of Marie Odell, my next door neighbor who was my age, and books. When we reached high school age, it was books and the companionship of Marie and others.
- RS: Was the Oquirrh a public school?
- Bird: Yes, it was part of the public school system. The Mormon Church also maintained elementary schools, and Marie Odell attended the one in our neighborhood.
- RS: Did you ever attend with her?
- Bird: Once or twice, and I remember the lunch hour was fun. Everyone brought something--sandwiches, fruit, salad, cake, cookies. All the food was then set down the middle of the long table and shared by everybody.

Bird: I preferred to eat with my family. There were usually several of us, and we were a merry group with both parents with us.

RS: Do you have memories of any special experiences in your elementary school days?

Bird: I think everything seemed special while I was experiencing it. In retrospect only a few memories persist: my lifelong gratitude to a seventh grade music teacher who insisted that I learn to sight-read music so that seeing the printed notes could forever bring sounds to my inner ear; the first awareness I had of self-assurance as I wrote and read the class history at the graduation exercises; a peculiar feeling I had at being out-voted two to one when the committee appointed to purchase a wedding gift for the math teacher selected a large silver-plated berry spoon over my vote for a small sterling silver lemon fork. It was not until long after that I began to think there might be a human instinct to choose the large as better than the small.

Then there is one tiny amusing memory that pops into my mind now and again because over the years I found I had learned a social lesson. One day at luncheon I asked my mother if I might go to the eighth grade class day picnic with Joe Daft who had invited me. Hardly had I finished speaking than my brother Scott sang out, "Grace is going dafty, Grace is going dafty." The whole table laughed. I am sure my own resentment was flashing signs, for my father leaned over and patted me saying, "Never mind being teased by someone who loves you...not now, not ever."

RS: Did you think of yourself as a leader at school or expect to be a leader?

Bird: Oh, no. I never thought of myself as a leader. I was just happy to be in that school that my sister, Laura, and my three brothers had attended. I seemed to belong there, and I liked everything that happened.

RS: Had your sister, Fannie, gone to private school?

Bird: Yes, I think to the Episcopal school.

RS: What do you remember about high school?

Bird: I was thirteen when I entered Salt Lake High School, the only public high school in the city at that time. It was on the west side of town about a mile from our home on the east side. Those of us who lived in our block usually walked together joining other friends along the way. I always enjoyed those early morning walks. Salt Lake City's streets were lined with shade trees and when it rained,

Bird: crystal clear water ran in gutters down all of them in residential areas.

Pollution was unknown except when the coal furnaces in every home made a fresh snow in winter black by midnight. It was as if a genie with bellows as wide as the wind coated the snow with chimney soot. But if the snow fell after midnight, the trek to the high school was now down the white streetcar tracks, partially cleared by the snow plow. Bundled in our winter clothes, we must have looked like a skein of young caribou filing down the narrow path.

Pleasant friendships grew up among us as we picked up others along the route. Some were already my close friends from our association through St. Mark's Episcopal Church. We went to the school dances together during the school year. We hiked up City Creek Canyon to gather Se-go lilies and Indian Paint Brush in the springs. In summer groups of us floated on our backs in the water always heavy with salt of Great Salt Lake. My companionship with those friends and neighbors persisted during all my Salt Lake days, and I wish there were now a way to tell them how much pleasure they gave me.

Have I told you, by the way, that I had begun to take tennis lessons and to let the piano slide?

RS: You said you began to love tennis. When did you start?

Bird: When I was twelve, probably the summer before. My parents encouraged my tennis playing when they saw how much I enjoyed it and how much I worked at it. From being a mediocre player at first I had an unusual opportunity to become a good one when a small group of men built a tennis court over our back fence. If they were short a player for doubles or if only one wanted practice at singles, I was often asked to join the game. When I was sixteen, I was pressed into playing for the Salt Lake County championship when the seeded player was injured. My partner and I, primarily my partner, won the championship in mixed doubles.

RS: Well, tennis is the rage again today.

Bird: Yes, as the fraternity pin was replaced by the guitar as a status symbol, so the guitar has been replaced by the racquet.

RS: What program of studies did you take in the high school?

Bird: The traditional college preparatory program of that day plus some additions because of my liking of certain subjects, French in particular. Thus, by the time I had finished high school I had four

Bird: years each of English and French, three and a half years of math, two years each in history and science, and one-half year of instrumental drawing.

RS: A notable bunch of solids. Did you take part in student activities?

Bird: No. In May, 1906, there was a tragedy at home that made a difference from then on in my life. After several months of illness with a bad heart, my father died. His death came during my first year in high school. In June my sister, Fannie, married Edward B. Sterling in the ceremony in which my father had planned to take part. My sister, Laura, had been married to Frederick W. Sinclair in 1904. Thus I was now the only daughter at home with my mother.

Besides the loss of a man beloved by a wife and children with all our hearts, my father's death meant the loss of a generous supporting income. There was left an income for my mother and a small one for me until I reached eighteen. It was a time of change and sorrow. My mother showed a courage as great as that her mother had shown in her journey from England to Utah. I did everything I could to ease her grief and with my brother, William, who was still home, to preserve the feeling of the home my parents had created.

RS: How did you try to do this?

Bird: I think by my behavior I tried to show her how deeply all of her family loved her, for she had just lost her life practically in my father. It was a beautiful marriage. All of us thought they were never out of love. I mean there always seemed to be a certain fresh romantic quality in their love. This was reinforced when I spent a weekend one summer with one of my mother's old school friends who said, "Your mother and father were always in love."

Another lifelong friend whom we always called Auntie Harrison told me that many of their friends thought my parents had a marriage of unusual happiness. This was our cherished legacy.

RS: As a child growing up, were you aware of working for goals?

Bird: I think that probably if I strove at all it was to be what people expected of me at the moment. I strove to be a good student, but not to get good grades. It may have been for the respect of the teacher and, of course, for the pleasure it gave my mother, but still that is not the essence. I wanted whatever I became or achieved to be worthy evidence of my love for my parents. I have not striven for myself, but to provide some worthy evidence of my loyalty or love for some ideal, some person, some belief, some conviction.

RS: Something or someone beyond yourself. What were you thinking about specializing in when you went to college?

Bird: Well, in my junior year in high school I began thinking and talking about architecture. I think it was probably a daydream, but architecture was a creative profession and I had been enjoying the math and science that would be necessary to structural aspects of the profession.

RS: Did you know about Julia Morgan at that time?

Bird: Yes, Mother knew a good deal about Julia Morgan. I only knew what she told me about her after I began to talk about architecture at home.

RS: Was your mother's influence a factor in your choice?

Bird: Not really in my choice, but certainly she encouraged it later.

Recollections of Grandmother Lapish

RS: Before we go on to talk about your university days, tell me your recollections of your Grandmother Lapish.

Bird: While I was a child I saw her only as a member of the family group when she and Uncle Joe would spend a Sunday or holiday with us. I sensed from my parents' attitude toward them that they were unusual and wide-awake people, so I listened attentively when they talked to me. I think they helped bend the small twig that I was in the direction of social consciousness. After I was ten I used to go to call on them alone.

Grandmother always served tea and often what she called "stir-cake" baked in a deep angel food pan. The name came from tossing all the ingredients into a yellow bowl and then stirring furiously before folding in milk or cream. Over tea and still warm stir-cake Grandmother talked, and Uncle Joe and I listened. Rarely was the conversation about events; it was usually about ideas and points of view. I seemed to understand it. Yet when she gave me books (books were always what she gave me for Christmas or for a birthday), I found my mind had to stand on tiptoe to grasp their meaning, for it would not be Frances Hodgson Burnett who was the author but John Ruskin. The pockets of my memory were still too empty of cities, paintings, architecture, museums to provide the needed references. By today, however, Sesame and Lilies has become an old friend.

Bird: One day when I was a high school junior, I told her over our tea that I was going to the prom with Georgius Cannon, the son of Bishop Cannon of her church. She replied, "Yes, and the grandson of George Q. Cannon." It was George Q. Cannon who had taken the call to the Lapishes in 1859 to leave Virginia and start for Utah.

III STUDENT DAYS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

RS: Let's talk about your entrance to the University of California and go through your university years.

Bird: I came to the University from Salt Lake High School. I was seventeen and though that was old enough to know a lot of things, it was rather young to find myself in my first educational community. Fortunately for me, the University was not then of a size that meant that there were long registration lines. I took the street-car to the campus from Oakland, where I was staying temporarily with my sister, Laura (Mrs. Fred Sinclair).

Well, I arrived at Berkeley and presented myself at California Hall, which was then the center of the activities of entering the University. It also housed the president's office and the offices of the regents and deans of women, deans of men. In other words, it was the center that Sproul Hall later became.

RS: This would have been in 1910?

Bird: This was in the spring of 1910. I had traveled during the fall of 1909 with my mother. We took a trip to get our bearings just before I was to leave home in Salt Lake and enter the University. Mother then returned to that home until she sold it and later established a new one in Santa Monica.

Well, when I arrived at California Hall there were a few young people wearing tags who directed me upstairs to the admissions office. There was nobody ahead of me in line at the window! The admissions officer at that time was James Fiske, a relatively young man with a very gracious manner. Not only did he help me fill out my application, he told me where to report for the examination called Subject A required of new students, and he advised me with reference to the program of studies, all being done without any hurry.

- Bird: Because I was a student from out of state, I was told I would have to have the approval of my program by Professor O.K. McMurray and then pay the out-of-state tuition. When I left Mr. Fiske, I asked one of the student helpers where I might find Professor McMurray. He answered, "Bolallalah." I asked him to repeat and again I heard "Bolallalah," but this time he gestured toward the south, so I walked in that direction. The next building I came to was named Boalt Hall of Law! This was my introduction to the University, and "Bolallalah" became my private bleacher yell.
- RS: What student activities appealed to you once you were registered and all?
- Bird: I never thought about student activities at that time. The only plunge I was thinking about making was into the huge sea of course offerings. I did pledge Sigma Kappa, and I kept up my tennis until the long lab hours of courses in art and science began to claim my time.
- RS: I'd like to hear about your academic program as a freshman.
- Bird: If I may, I should prefer to report on the first three semesters since some of the year-sequence courses could not be started until fall 1910. Thus I could complete certain courses preliminary to upper division architecture not available to me in spring 1910. These were pen and ink sketching, water color, history of architecture. Academic courses were in English, mathematics, French, physics, chemistry, paleontology, logic, and history.
- RS: Which subjects did you enjoy most of all? What did you find most valuable?
- Bird: I really enjoyed all my subjects my first year and thereafter. I think the teacher of a subject and his skill in evoking a fresh way of seeing things, an inner urge to know more in the subject field, and some hints for directing one's own studies colored my enjoyment of a subject and enhanced its value. If I were to choose two whose influence on me is as alive as it was some sixty-odd years ago, I should name Frederick T. Blanchard with whom I studied freshman English and the history of English literature and John C. Merriam who taught paleontology.

Mr. Blanchard taught me to realize how evanescent thinking (or thought) is until we give it form. For the musician the form might be, for example, a sonata; but for most of us the form is language. To communicate effectively, the language must be correct, clear, and, at least, a little vivid. I cannot believe any person who studied with him did not grow in respect and love of the English language. Moreover, we enjoyed the little river of humor that ran through his lectures.

Bird: Professor Merriam was quite different as a person from Professor Blanchard, but I believe a more truly master teacher. His subject field inevitably enlarged one's point of view and either reinforced or modified one's convictions. As he took us through the life story of so many creatures in the animal world including man, we were awakened and reawakened to our universal affinity with all life and to the growing complexity of such tools of living as the nervous system. By the manner in which he taught and by the gentleness of his person, I believe we grew in wisdom and compassion.

There were other teachers I greatly enjoyed in French, philosophy, history, architecture, but I have named these two as excellent examples.

RS: How many people were in a class at the University at that time?

Bird: I think there were almost 800 graduates in our class. I do not know how many we were as freshmen or sophomores.

RS: Did you have the sense of being in a large community, or did you feel it was rather an intimate community?

Bird: No, I think I had a sense of it being a large community; it was larger, much so, than the high school I had attended. And San Francisco was always there across the Bay.

On Joining a Sorority

RS: You have told me you joined a sorority.

Bird: Yes, I joined Sigma Kappa, and I moved into its house my second semester. I lived there most of my undergraduate days.

RS: Where was it located?

Bird: About where Cowell Hospital is now. At that time College Avenue continued north beyond Bancroft for another long block. The bridge over Strawberry Creek just north of the Women's Faculty Club marked the end of College Avenue. The entrance to the Sigma Kappa house across the street was through a long avenue of eucalyptus trees. On the north side of the house was a bank of myrtle running down into Strawberry Creek. We were, therefore, across the creek from the Greek Theater, and we attended everything given there.

RS: Were there many offerings?

Bird: Yes, and at that time everything that was offered drew an almost full audience. There were relatively few automobiles in 1910 and never any parking problems. People walked or rode streetcars. People came from San Francisco by the Key Route. Little streams of people came up all the approaches to the theater.

RS: Before we continue your memories of the Greek Theater, I should be interested in your opinion of sororities on campus.

Bird: I cannot make a sweeping generalization, but I can tell what my opinion is from my own experience. From my associations with my companions and my knowledge of the democratic ways in which we lived, I have only praise for sororities. They provided a nice form of dormitory life for many young women in a university that had no dormitories. But they did much more. Sororities were committed to ideals of personal conduct and to the support of the University's ideals. The members sought to have all their members make strong academic records, and they were mutually supportive of one another in other ways as well. There was a real feeling of family life and of affection for the housemother. Our loyalty to President Wheeler and the rarely seen regents was deep and firm. We had faith in one another.

The Greek Theater

RS: The Greek Theater was, at that time, frequently used for many kinds of performances, was it not?

Bird: Every Sunday afternoon through much of the year there was a Sunday afternoon concert in the Greek Theater. Besides that, famous theater stars played in the Greek Theater, such as Sothern and Marlowe who presented four or five plays of Shakespeare during my college years. I saw Margaret Anglin, America's most famous actress of classic Greek plays, in Antigone, and Sarah Bernhardt in Racine's Phèdre. The fare was rich and worthy in those days.

RS: Did the students produce anything?

Bird: Yes, indeed. The English Club produced a play once a year, usually Shakespeare. The senior class presented an annual extravaganza just before commencement.

Lawrence Livingston wrote ours with two romantic leading characters (talented singers) and two comedy leads (Lawrence, himself, and me).

Bird: The students also held their pajamarino rally and bonfire in the Greek Theater. I recall that Joel Hildebrand of the faculty was the speaker at my first pajamarino rally. He was about twenty-nine years old.

RS: Were any campus ceremonies held there?

Bird: Oh, yes. Commencement and Charter Day exercises were held there, and noted people gave lectures from time to time. I heard Theodore Roosevelt speak on "Realizable Ideals" and was deeply moved by that man's vigorous dedication to his (our) country. "Stabat Mater" was sung in a performance every Good Friday.

Extracurricular Activities

RS: I'd like to hear about your own activities outside the classroom.

Bird: Let me mention three without discussing them beyond saying they gave me the pleasure of knowing people with different talents who were devoted to their special fields of interest. Because of my work in water color, pen and ink, and clay modeling, I was elected to the Art Honor Society, Delta Epsilon. I was also vice-president of the Architecture Association.

Then for some reason of which I was never very sure, I was editor for a semester of one of the student newspapers on campus called Brass Tacks, and for this I was elected to the National Journalism Honor Society. I've forgotten its Greek name.

RS: Was Brass Tacks published as a protest against the Daily Californian?

Bird: No, not at all. It was just another voice on campus. It supplemented the Daily Cal. It looked upon its function as that of stirring people up to thinking about campus functions and problems, not rubber-stamping or not voting at all. It sought a wider participation in the political life of the campus especially by the large numbers of students who commuted from San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda, and other counties. (Remember we were not yet a society of motor cars.) If Brass Tacks had any cause, it was to promote more attention to the fine arts in the Daily Cal and on campus generally.

RS: Now that you mention commuters and have spoken of the Bay as part of the life of students, will you tell us just how you made the trip to San Francisco before there was a Bay Bridge?

Bird: The Key Route System ran electric trains from several points in the East Bay out on a spit of land in the Bay from which we embarked by ferry for the city. No one who did not live on the east

Bird: side of the Bay before the Bay Bridge was built will ever know the joys brought us by crossing by ferry boat. The water seemed close enough to hear our talk and its wake to hold our memories. Even the engines were hearts with systolic and diastolic beats. When we debarked at the Ferry Building, we all rushed for a streetcar at the turnaround loop at the foot of Market Street, and off we went for the center of town and its theaters and hotels. The trip had cost forty cents from the campus to the St. Francis.

RS: Being on the water was conducive to a feeling of good fellowship and good times, I gather.

Bird: Very much so.

RS: What did students get stirred up about in those days?

Bird: In my last years in college, the war in Europe. There were outspoken interventionists from the moment of the violation of Belgium's neutrality by Germany. I was one.

There were others who felt just as sincerely that we should hold back. I think our respect for one another's sincerity kept tensions from developing. There came a time finally when the whole nation believed Germany had to be stopped. I think before 1914 we were not particularly stirred up about anything except brief campus issues. We worked with the University administration, not against it.

RS: Were you involved in supporting the war effort? Did you have any activities of that sort?

Bird: Before we had entered the war, I helped raise funds to send an ambulance corps from the University of California to the war zone in France. Stanford already had one ambulance corps there and was raising funds for a second one. I found many of our students already interested. The Associated Students had appointed a committee to raise funds.

RS: What did you do to raise funds?

Bird: Having by now a little experience in play production, I decided to put together a show that would help the drive considerably. I knew a number of talented people in Berkeley, and I put together something which I called "Shavian Shavings," that is, shavings from George Bernard Shaw.

RS: Did you write it?

Bird: I wrote the introduction, if one can call it writing when I used Shaw's own words, and I wrote the closing scene. In between was entertainment Shaw had arranged for the guests he had invited to his home for the evening.

RS: It sounds ingenious. Will you tell a little more about it to show the design?

Bird: The scene was the living room in Shaw's home. As the curtains began to open on the room, Shaw (played by the poet-professor Leonard Bacon) stepped to the front of the stage and addressed the audience as if all were indeed his guests for the evening. As he finished, his real stage guests began to come into the room from off-stage.

The last to arrive was Mrs. Marguerite Ricard, a beautiful woman and gifted singer and diseuse who was prominent in Bay Area society. She came down the center aisle of the theater in a French shepherdess costume calling, "Allo, am I late?" Shaw and the other guests greeted her merrily as one of them, and soon she was giving a performance in the manner of Yvette Guilbert who was then the toast of Paris. The audience, which more than filled the auditorium, loved her.

Shaw told his guests that after dinner he had arranged to have presented for their pleasure two plays. His servant announced dinner, and the guests moved toward the dining room. Two of them paused before leaving the living room (Marion Stebbins, professor of drama at Mills College, and Austin Sperry of the Bohemian Club). They began a personal conversation apparently, but the lines they spoke were from a charming very short play called A Marriage Has Been Arranged. The servant comes into the room again, and they leave for the dining room. End of Scene 1. The next two scenes presented the two plays that Shaw had promised, and the last scene was in Shaw's living room again with the guests acknowledging their host's hospitality and saying goodnight. The curtains begin to close slowly. As the last guests leave, Shaw turns to the audience and says, "And a goodnight to you," as the small opening in the curtain closes.

RS: What an elaborate production.

Bird: All of us who had helped with the production including the talented actors were rewarded because we could send a sizable check to the Associated Students for the ambulance corps.

RS: Also, you were in the Prytanean Society, an honor society for women.

Bird: I was elected as an undergraduate. While doing graduate work, I was appointed general chairman of the annual Prytanean Fête. This was the money-raising event to support the organization's service activities on campus.

RS: The experience must have given you experience in directing a fairly large project.

Bird: Yes, it did. I am sure it helped prepare for some of the experiences later in my life as an educator. It involved careful and detailed planning. It involved dealing with several sub-committees with the exercise of, may I say, "democratic leadership."

The Partheneia--A Formative Experience

RS: You've said that your experience with the Partheneia had helped prepare you in more specific ways for what you became as an administrator than any other single student activity.

Bird: I think that's true. It was a very complex undertaking. It was in every aspect a creative undertaking. It involved scores of women students as participants or as committee members. It was expensive in student time and in money outlay.

RS: Will you tell the meaning of "Partheneia" as used here and something of its beginning at the University?

Bird: In ancient Greece, the term referred to a certain religious song with flute accompaniment and a choir of maidens in dance-like movements. In 1911-1912, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, then dean of women, presented the suggestion that the women students undertake the presentation of an outdoor masque in the spring with all phases of the production done by women students: costume, stage design where needed, dance, players, etc. Her suggestion was endorsed with enthusiasm. The first Partheneia was presented in the spring, 1912. Thereafter one was presented each year until time and expense brought the practice to a close.

RS: With which Partheneia were you connected?

Bird: That of spring, 1915, but we all began work on it in fall, 1914. The author was Mary Van Orden, a graduate student. The composer was Charles Louis Seeger, chairman of the music department. The dance director was Mabel Otis of the physical education department. The costumes were designed by a fellow student, Anita Moffett (a great-niece of Mark Twain) except for certain costumes worn in the masque within the play. The director of the overall production was Porter Garnett.

RS: What was the title of the 1915 Partheneia?

Bird: It was called The Queen's Masque. In form it was a masque within a play. The speaking characters in the play were Elizabeth, Queen of England, and the host who was entertaining her and her retinue of courtiers and ladies; the poet who had written the masque; and the

Bird: host's factotum, a sort of chief steward to the host who was in charge of the day. And there was an orchestra and a hidden choir. The play was divided into a prologue, an interlude, and an epilogue. The masque was in two parts: the first, among fairies; the second, among a rabble of wretched people. In both of these scenes moved Margat: half-fairy and half-woman at first, and, at the end, a true woman, compassionate and loving.

RS: What were your responsibilities for the production?

Bird: I had been designated "student production manager," which meant I was a student assistant director to Mr. Garnett and coordinated the work of Mr. Seeger, Miss Otis, and Miss Moffett; I helped select the cast and helped with rehearsals when necessary.

RS: Where was the Partheneia presented?

Bird: In the lovely Faculty Glade, using the flat area for the stage and the hillside for seating the audience. There were more handsome oaks standing there than now, and the top of the hill had an indefinite amount of space for seats.

RS: With that large a cast and that many creative minds involved, weren't there some clashes of temperament?

Bird: Alas, yes; and this was a new experience for me. The dance director insisted that the dance music was too modern, too cacophonous for her to design any "lovely dance" of the water lilies, for example. She threatened to resign from the task.

The composer's reply was, "Let her resign." You see, this required that I resolve the differences if we were to have a performance. High diplomacy no less! Well, to complete our story, the performance was presented on schedule with enthusiastic acclaim by the large audience and unusually favorable reviews by the press. No one was more proud than were the dance director and the composer.

RS: Would you include any of your university experience in dramatics as important in preparing you for your later career in education?

Bird: Not as specifically as these we have just discussed. But the experience was always full of joy, and I believe strongly that those who are involved in the education of youth should understand the power of joy and nurture it whenever they can.

Other Dramatic Productions

RS: Would you tell about your other experiences with drama on campus?

Bird: While playing roles in the Junior Farce and the Senior Extravaganza, I made the acquaintance of the director, Garnet Holmes. He told me he was planning to produce two plays in the Greek Theater in the summer and invited me to try out for a part. This led to a very happy experience for me.

Two plays by the East Indian writer, Kalidasa, called the Shakespeare of India, were produced. One was his most famous play, Shakuntala, and the other was his Hindu farce titled The Hazard of the King. I had interesting and sympathetic roles in both.

RS: Were they prominent parts?

Bird: They were what is often called "the second lead."

RS: How often were they performed?

Bird: Twice in the Greek Theater, and then we went down the peninsula with The Hazard of the King and performed one evening on the beautiful grounds of the lovely old Del Monte Hotel and one night in the Forest Theater at Carmel. Thus we learned the virtue of flexibility; for the Forest Theater was relatively compact and possessed an almost full complement of stage setting; the grounds at Del Monte were spacious with just enough stage properties to create the illusion of a setting. But oh, what delicious fun it all was! And the most wonderful part of all was knowing Arthur M. Ryder, the translator of Kalidasa and one of the great authorities on Sanskrit then living.

RS: What do you remember about Dr. Ryder?

Bird: I did not know him well enough to tell anything beyond my impressions from our short acquaintance. He was a quiet, agreeably humorous man, and yet I thought an intense one. He was a stimulating talker fond of exploring by-paths of thought. It is interesting to recall that one of the earliest--possibly the first--productions in the Greek Theater on the Berkeley campus was his translation of The Little Clay Cart. He also translated The Bhagavad-Gita and that marvelous collection of 2,000-year-old tales from Kashmir called The Panchatantra, which ranks with Aesop's Fables and Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. He was a truly great and exciting scholar.

Major Academic Interests

RS: You graduated in what major field finally?

Bird: In my upper division I completed majors in architecture and French, a rich minor in English, and courses in education which I had begun in summer session. I think I have explained that I had begun to wake up from my youthful dream of architecture while recognizing my mediocre talent for that field on the one hand and my ever deepening interest in people on the other.

In my graduate years I completed all course work for the higher degree in French--let me interrupt myself to say that I loved every course I ever studied in French--and completed requirements in education for the teaching credential.

RS: Doesn't the credential require practice teaching?

Bird: Yes, and I was permitted to substitute for it a class the French department had invited me to teach in nineteenth-century French literature.

RS: Oh, that's an advanced course!

Bird: I knew that and prayed that the students wouldn't lose too much by not having a native French person as instructor.

RS: So you received the credential after your graduate study. As we close this part of your story, let me ask you what of all your experiences at the University contributed most to your later life?

Bird: Oh, I feel sure that what happened to me in the classroom of almost every course I took contributed the most. How can one measure the influences of more than eighty years? The classrooms were a continuing process of expanding the mind, giving it the kind of mental tools it could use, providing a variety of paths for choices of action, clearing away prejudices, suggesting ways of solving problems, stirring interest in people, in motives, and, very high on the list, nourishing the spirit and pointing to paths of enrichment.

However, I also believe that my experiences in student activities (all of them, but some much more than others) were of great immediate worth; for these developed self-confidence, pleasure in person-to-person relationships, ability to function in group activities with fairness, ability to organize, and, I think I should add, ability to communicate reasonably well.

RS: Would you like to comment further on specific courses and professors?

Bird: One of the larger gaps in my knowledge of peoples and places was in the world of the Arabs, particularly of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire. When I enrolled in a course in Semitics with Professor Popper, ground beneath me shifted, and my view of the Near East and Turkey and the water of the Bosphorus stood in a brighter sunlight.

Professor Derrick Lehmer took me on a different journey in differential calculus. He stressed the theory and taught us to be at home with the derivation of formulae no matter where we were. It made me feel closer to philosophy than to engineering.

My study of logic was with Professor George Adams, and I have solved many problems by listing the several factual ingredients and letting them fall into the one logical conclusion.

Three of the upper division courses I took in the English department were Shakespeare with Professor Walter M. Hart and Elizabethan drama and eighteenth century drama, both with William D. Armes. The methods of teaching of Professors Hart and Armes could not be more different, but both awakened me. Professor Hart taught by a minute examination of the text and a tracing of the changes in the meaning of words in Shakespeare to that in our common use today. It was almost like learning the play by heart. I loved it.

More traditional but equally inspiring, Professor Armes described characteristics of the periods of the plays and their influence on the writers. He read excerpts, pointing out their beauty or their satire or their tragedy, and thus led our own appreciations. He, too, was a superior teacher.

I hesitate to begin talking of French and architecture; for with majors in both fields, there were many separate courses and many different teachers. None were not enjoyed. Most were enjoyed to the fullest.

Although I have given most of my library to Bakersfield College, four writers from those studied with the instructors mentioned here or earlier remain on my shelves: Shakespeare (all plays and poems), Michel de Montaigne (essays), Marlowe (Dr. Faustus and other plays), and Robert Louis Stevenson (essays, stories, prayers). Not mentioned but as an appreciation of Professor Popper, I have read and retained Land of Emperor and Sultan (J.B. Méchin).

RS: Was your graduate work in education?

Bird: Except for graduate seminars in French, my graduate studies were in the School of Education with Dean W.W. Kemp and Professor Rugh (nick-named Moral Rugh). Both men demanded much and gave back far more. And that was the University of California in my experience.

IV BAKERSFIELD: BEGINNING A CAREER

RS: I'd like to move on to the beginning of your teaching career. Would you talk about how it was that you came to Bakersfield and what you did after you got there?

Bird: After obtaining the teaching credential, a friend of mine, Elmer Shirrell, who was teaching in the small but good junior college in Bakersfield, suggested that I apply for a position in Bakersfield High School (then called Kern County Union High School). I did, and I received an appointment upon the recommendation of Principal Arthur J. Ludden ("A.J."). I began a career in professional education in Bakersfield in fall, 1917 that lasted thirty-two years.

RS: Do you recall your early impressions of the city of Bakersfield?

Bird: I remember some very well because they were in such contrast with what I had been led to believe. A scholarly acquaintance of mine had been sent there a few years before to give a lecture on the influence of classical Greece on our own nation. He stayed at the Old Southern Hotel, then the main hotel. The first thing he observed in the lobby, in addition to two intoxicated men, was a slot machine. And the first anecdote from Bakersfield history he heard was that of a famous "shoot-out" a block or so away between a western "bad man" and the sheriff. He began to wonder what he might say to interest people like these in the Parthenon or Aechylus or Socrates and Plato.

Well, you see, this yarn was in my thoughts when I reached Bakersfield. But another thing my friend had told me was also in my thoughts.

RS: What was that?

Bird: He told me he was a guest at dinner before the lecture at the home of Adolph Weill and his family. Here he found people of culture and great kindness. His earlier concern about what he might say in his lecture began to vanish.

Bird: Well, I, too, found Bakersfield had contrasts, but now there was a very high ratio of people of education and culture. It still had a frontier atmosphere with its major activities in agriculture and petroleum, but it was an atmosphere of generosity, intelligence, and good will.

RS: So, you first went to Bakersfield as a high school teacher. How did you become involved in the junior college?

Bird: When I first reported for a program of work in September, 1917, I discovered that I was to teach a course in college French A-B, the equivalent course to that of the University of California of the same title. The rest of my program was in high school French and one class in senior high school English literature.

RS: The French, which you had taken for the pleasure of it, turned out to be more useful in getting a job than your architecture major.

Bird: Yes, indeed. But I was also happy to have a class in English. I'm truly devoted to the English language as a means of communication in its practical sense and for enjoyment in its aesthetic sense.

Well, after my first year in the college French class, I had a closer tie with the junior college because the students asked me to become their adviser, and Mr. Ludden made it an official appointment.

RS: What did this entail?

Bird: Primarily being adviser to their student activities and their social life, but my teaching program was still more than half in the high school division.

In 1920, the dean (chief administrator) of the junior college, Paul Vandereike, who was also a part-time vice-principal of the high school, took a leave of absence, and Mr. Ludden asked me to substitute for him. Thus I became acting dean of the junior college. Now the entire program of the college fell to me.

RS: It occurs to me that you were only about twenty-five or so at a time when most women did not have careers, and here you were suddenly in a position of responsibility. I wonder how you felt about it, and whether you had moments of thinking, "Oh, dear, can I do this job?"

Bird: I was pleased, of course, but I think I thought very little about being made an administrator of a small college where I already knew personally each student who was in the college and all the faculty. Moreover, Mr. Ludden had been having my services part-time as a vice-principal for academic affairs in the high school, and I was familiar with the whole campus faculty and many high school student leaders.

Bird: In an institution as small as the junior college was then--about thirty students--faculty and administration and, yes, students too, all worked closely together as if a family--and a happy family at that.

Have I told you yet that one of the several new teachers who came to Bakersfield the same year I did was Herman Spindt? He was employed to teach economics and political science in the college to take the place of Elmer Shirrell who had entered military service when the nation went to war in April, 1917. In 1920 when Mr. Vander Eike took his leave of absence, Mr. Spindt was appointed to assume his half-time duties as vice-principal of the high school, and I had become the acting dean of the junior college. Later Mr. Spindt became director of admissions at the University.

RS: In 1921 you actually became dean. How did that come about?

Bird: After a few months into his leave, Mr. Vandereike met with Mr. Ludden to discuss the assignments he might have on his return to the school district. Mr. Ludden told him he would like to leave me in charge of the junior college. Mr. Vandereike expressed pleasure and said that that would have been his own recommendation. He said he would prefer to work in the district as Mr. Ludden's vice-principal than as chief executive of the college. So Mr. Ludden's recommendations to that effect were accepted by the board, and I was transformed overnight from a cardboard dean into the real thing. There was no actual metamorphosis since I kept on doing what I had already been doing--trying to keep the college on an even keel. I had become a dean by accretion and not by a "big bang," as an astronomer might say.

RS: Now, this was very unusual for a woman to be appointed dean of a junior college in California, was it not?

Bird: There were no others at that time, but it was unusual only in that sense. When I attended state meetings with the other chief administrative officers of the junior colleges, I think neither I nor they thought anything about it being unusual.

I think we only thought we were people who believed in the junior college movement, who wanted to do everything we could for our own community and our own students in the junior college movement, and so I took part, without awareness of the fact that I was a woman among a lot of men. Well, not exactly unaware; for with all the cigarette and cigar smoke at the meetings, I had to hang my clothes outside overnight when I returned home. [Laughter.]

RS: After becoming dean of the junior college, did you continue teaching at the high school?

Bird: I did for several years. The first thing I had to give up was teaching. I had probably given up my high school classes by 1921 or so, but I clung to my college classes as long as I possibly could. Teaching is really the richest experience in the education profession. But in a few more years I gave up my last college classes.

My administrative duties with Mr. Spindt and my responsibilities in the college division grew greater with the multiplying of enrollments in the high school and the college, the increases in faculty, and the continuing improvement of administrative services.

During the Christmas holidays, 1922, Mr. Ludden died from injuries received in an automobile accident. Judge Erwin Owen, chairman of the Board of Trustees, asked me to carry Mr. Ludden's duties until a new superintendent-principal could be appointed. So effective was the organization Mr. Ludden had created and so great the devotion of students and faculty to his memory that things ran almost by themselves.

Oh, there were a few tricky moments. One day I had to stop a fight between two husky high school seniors by pushing my way through a widening circle that was cheering the combattants on, and then stepping between the fighters. The fight stopped at once. I motioned to the circle to break up, and there was no threat of the fight being resumed elsewhere. Thus, once again my belief in the decency of youth was justified.

The junior college students offered assistance in routine matters while I was doing double duty, but it was Herman Spindt who became the indispensable administrator and Freda Weichelt of Mr. Ludden's office staff who became the indispensable secretary. Within a month the whole campus was hoping Mr. Spindt would be named the new superintendent-principal, and four months after Mr. Ludden's death he was so appointed by the board.

After his appointment he asked me to remain as the dean of the junior college, and Mr. Vandereike and me to remain as high school vice-principals. I would still be a sort of academic vice-principal and Mr. Vandereike would serve as a coordinator between the branch high schools in the surrounding area and Mr. Spindt as the superintendent and principal in Bakersfield. This became our administrative pattern for more than a dozen years.

Origin of the Junior College in California

RS: Were the high school and junior college on the same campus?

Bird: Yes. The junior college was an extension upward into the 13th and 14th grade of local public school education. I think that I should use a few minutes to tell how the junior colleges became part of California's public school system since it is not well known to laymen.

RS: That would be interesting.

Bird: In 1910 a legislator in Sacramento (A. Caminetti) introduced a bill that would enable high school districts to offer work of college grade for high school graduates. He had argued that in a state as large as California with its state university located in a single center (Berkeley), except for agriculture at Davis and medical sciences in San Francisco, hundreds of students in areas distant from these places were either deprived of a university education or obliged to obtain it at considerable expense in travel and board and room away from home. The legislation passed.

Local high school districts who chose to do so could now extend upward and offer courses equivalent in value to lower division university courses. Their graduates could advance toward the college degree while still living at home.

RS: Then the junior colleges began as an outpost of the University?

Bird: As an outpost for university-equivalent study, but as an integral part of local public education and not of the University itself.

There were two other early laws affecting junior college education, one in 1917 and one in 1921. By these laws the junior colleges were authorized to form separate districts under certain conditions if they chose.

But what was more significant, the function of the junior college was now recognized as a community function and not alone a university-transfer function. So as the junior college students increased in numbers and as the community grew larger and more complex, the junior college began to develop curricula in other fields than for transfer to senior colleges. I shall want to talk about this from time to time because the development is important in the junior college movement.

Life in Bakersfield in the Twenties

RS: Let's return to your early days. Where did you live?

Bird: In a very fortunate place. I lived in the home of Mrs. Charlotte Jameson, the daughter of Colonel Thomas Baker, founder of Bakersfield. Elva Murray (later Mrs. A.C. Dimon) had a room adjoining mine with a connecting door that was rarely closed. She was another of the new high school teachers. (We had a lifelong friendship which included her husband.) The other member of the Jameson household was Mrs. Jameson's mother, Ellen Baker Tracy, who, after the death of Colonel Baker, had married his closest friend.

RS: How fortunate you were to be that close to the history of the place in which you would be teaching.

Bird: Elva and I both thought so. Mrs. Tracy told us a few tales of her earliest days in the 1860's. Life was not easy. They had brought a cow and chickens down from Havilah, the first capital of Kern County, but otherwise they had to feed themselves from their own garden and wild game which they killed and dressed.

She opened her small home to be a schoolroom for the children of the few other pioneers. There were no books. She taught letters and arithmetic from sheets of paper she prepared herself. She told us the Indians were not troublesome, but that "bad men" were often a threat. Once she chased an armed man from her property with a broom and ordered others away with a shotgun.

Today it is my very good fortune to know her grandson, Kenneth Jameson, and his truly charming wife, Dorothy, who live in San Francisco. Although both have been deaf since childhood, they read lips well, and Kenneth speaks with careful diction. Lights in their apartment tell them when the doorbell or telephone is ringing. Their special telephone equipment types out the caller's words and Dorothy types their responses; thus they can "converse" with friends. I am sure Kenneth's sturdy and fearless grandparents would embrace this younger couple for their courageous and happy effort to include the outside world in their lives.

RS: Are there other things about those early days you would like to tell?

Bird: The heat, of course, that was not relieved by air conditioning. People built their homes with a large family room in the relatively cool basement. Mrs. Jameson's house had such a room, and it saved us more than once when the temperature rose above one hundred.

Bird: But, oh, the glory of the wild flowers in the twenties! Hundreds of acres of land had lain fallow in the valley south of Bakersfield for years and years. The mid-Twenties brought unusual rainfall in the springs, and the long-seeded land responded. The acres east of Highway 99 became a vast inland sea of lupine--I think more than three thousand acres extending from Comanche Point to Edison and beginning to climb the eastern hills. I had never before felt such sustained ecstasy as I felt over its beauty. The appearance was of solid blue lupine moving in the light wind like water, but when we left the car to walk into it, we found just as much tall lavender Persian prince (thistle sage), salvia, purple penstamen standing up, baby blue eyes hugging the ground, and every sort of wild flower I ever knew except those of the forests.

People came over the Ridge Route from Southern California in files of cars such as one sees in commuter traffic. Max Reinhardt, the theatrical producer, was invited to speak in the field one Sunday, but when he arrived, he found words would not come. All that we heard were exclamations and the words, "Oh, God, see--see what you have made!"

RS: Were there other displays like this one in later years?

Bird: Not with the grandeur of this one. More and more acreage was being cultivated, farm towns were growing in size, there was a brief flurry over oil. All this meant that man was now beginning to control the land. However, where it was still free and when the rains were generous, wild flowers came, and our spirits were fed.

In one of these later years, the area north of Arvin gave a display of splendor, and I asked Ida Sproul to come down to see it. She, too, was overwhelmed.

RS: Did people often drive to Los Angeles for events?

Bird: I think the answer is "not very often except for something rather special." The Ridge Route at that time was a two-lane road over an ever winding climb. The state speed limit was thirty-five miles per hour, so we weren't embarrassed when that was as fast as our four-cylinder cars could go. So we braved the trip when Los Angeles offered an occasional opera or the Russian Ballet.

I remember well when Gladys Walker Knight and I drove over the mountains to see Pavlova and her new partner, Hubert Stowitts, whom I had known slightly at the University. It was about a four- to four-and-a-half-hour drive to downtown Los Angeles where the auditorium was. We had reached the top of the last high grade when the engine on Gladys's car quit. She opened the hood first from one side and then the other, peering and testing one thing and another. I was as useless as I felt. Presently she asked, "Have you a couple of hair pins?" [Laughter.] They worked.

Bird: Well, we reached the auditorium in time for the curtain. The car was put in an all-night garage while substitutes for the hair pins were found, and at eleven o'clock or so that night we set off for an uneventful return trip to Bakersfield, wholly refreshed by the beauty of the ballet.

Development of Community Organizations

RS: What changes did you notice in Bakersfield after World War I?

Bird: Well, after the armistice, California had a very great acceleration in population growth. While no doubt most of this was in the large city areas, Bakersfield grew rapidly too. And with growth came the desire to build a community of richer values for its citizens and especially for its young people. This period saw the founding of the Kern County Music Association, the Bakersfield Community Theater, the community forums, the beginning of the civic clubs such as Rotary, Kiwanis, etc., the start of a local branch of the American Association of University Women, and others.

RS: Would you like to tell about how these organizations developed?

Bird: I believe Reverend Willis G. White was the first president of the Music Association, but scores of music lovers helped. Mrs. Keith McKee, who, I think, was the second president, was one who gave time unstintingly to every cultural activity and who was a founder later of the Kern Philharmonic Orchestra. Others were Mr. and Mrs. Dwight L. Clarke, Harold J. Burt, conductor of the High School College Orchestra, the forerunner of the Philharmonic, Dr. "Zim" Zimmer, and many others.

The Bakersfield Community Theater's first president was Mrs. T.L. Cummins, and the director of its first production was Mrs. Allan Bruce Campbell, a well known and polished director. A little later, as I recall, a younger group joined the movement, and the director of its first production was Albert Johnson, a former student at Bakersfield College. He had recently become blind because of a disease of the retina.

I should like to note here that the college had made a supreme effort with the financial help of Rotary Club to save his sight by sending him to San Francisco for surgery and care by its internationally known surgeon, Dr. Hans Barkan, but it was too late. However, a group of his devoted young friends used their eyes for his.

RS: Is there anything you would like to add?

Bird: I should like to tell one of the delightful incidents about the first year of the Music Association, for it tells something more about the community as it was then.

RS: Yes, do.

Bird: That first year we had signed a contract for a music series of several thousand dollars with Dr. L.E. Behymer, the impresario in Los Angeles. We had no guarantors, so the little group of us who met one evening to help with ticket distribution was very anxious to learn whether our season ticket sales had covered the cost of the contract. Bakersfield had a group of generous citizens who had bought extra season subscriptions for us to give to students. Still we were more than a little worried. You can imagine our joy when Dr. White and Dwight Clark, the treasurer, reported that we had met the budget and had a surplus of \$2.65. We laughed all evening, not over the thousands that met the budget but over the surplus of \$2.65.

After a few seasons, the tickets to the music series really sold themselves. One of the additional pleasures I had, which was later shared with the dean of women, was to make arrangements for women students at the college to usher at the music series and thus have the opportunity to hear all the concerts. Notes have come from many of them in appreciation over the years.

Development of the Junior College Program

RS: When did you begin to feel you were primarily in the junior college?

Bird: The feeling was very strong in 1924, but I am aware it had been growing since I had been named acting dean, and more rapidly since 1921-1922. I think I had become not only occupied with junior college education but preoccupied with its meaning for all the people. It seemed to me that California had given itself a wonderful gift when it extended the privilege of post-high school education to every community--almost, one might say, to everybody's doorstep where a junior college was established.

RS: Will you tell about curriculum developments during those years?

- Bird: The university-transfer courses, which were strong from the beginning although limited in variety, were now increased in number. This was particularly true of courses for sophomores such as organic chemistry, quantitative analysis, English literature, philosophy, history of the Americas, and others. And we continued to maintain our reputation for high standards in these university-level courses.
- RS: How were the standards measured?
- Bird: By the records the students made in the universities and state colleges after transfer.
- RS: Can you explain that a little further? How did you know what records they made?
- Bird: The two universities to which most of our students transferred at that time were the University of California and Stanford. They sent us copies of the records made by our transfers in their first semester after transfer and a comparison of their grade-point average in the junior college with that made by them later in the university. If these were not very far apart, it was considered evidence of strong teaching and university-level grading standards. We always ranked among the best.
- RS: A record to be envied.
- Bird: I think the faculty wanted it to be this way, and since in my time this was the program most of our students wanted, I think they and their parents appreciated high standards too. But the transfer function was not our only function.
- RS: I remember you told me that the Education Code recognized other type courses offered to meet local needs.
- Bird: Yes, we began to offer courses in accounting, business math, and secretarial training. Students enrolled in their preference among these while taking concurrently electives in other courses. Let me tell you, however, about two new curricula that we organized specifically to meet community needs: one in nursing and one in electrical technology.

Because there was a shortage of nurses in the lower San Joaquin Valley, Mercy Hospital was trying to recruit through training on the job. The Sister who was supervisor of the hospital asked me if the college could help in any way. I believed we could since we had well prepared teachers in the sciences basic to nursing, but I wanted to discuss it first with the college teachers who would be concerned. Some of them might need to teach some of the courses as an extra teaching load but with extra pay.

Bird: The outcome was a special college-level curriculum embracing general chemistry for nurses, organic chemistry, physiology, and anatomy to which we added a little later a special section of psychology for nurses. These were offered on campus after the regular college days. The enrollees lived in the hospital dormitory and worked part time in the hospital as nursing assistants and trainees.

RS: How was the program financed? Did Mercy Hospital pay the college? Did the students pay tuition?

Bird: The program was offered without cost to the hospital or the students. The additional revenue we received from the state and county from average daily attendance of the students enrolled covered the additional costs to the school district.

RS: Do you want to tell about the other community-oriented major in electrical technology?

Bird: Kenneth Rich, chairman of the industrial arts department of the high school, always kept in touch with local needs in industrial fields. He found there was a shortage of trained electrical workers. He discussed his findings with Mr. Spindt and me. We agreed that a college-level course in electrical theory and practice offered promise and that our best qualified person to develop and teach the course was Mr. Rich himself. He was a graduate of Cal Tech and a very able person. I am not sure of my dates, but I think the program began in the late Twenties. If I am doubtful about the date, I am not in doubt about the remarkable placement record; for it was literally perfect for every student who completed the program.

Mr. Rich left the college to become the first principal of East Bakersfield High School. He remained a helpful and loyal friend of Bakersfield College.

I shall want to say more later about some other programs designed specifically for community purposes as we move through the years, but let's not leave the Twenties without telling something about the students' extra activities and a little about participation in the community.

Georgia App Camp

RS: Wasn't Georgia App Camp one of your earliest friends there?

Bird: Georgia was my first close friend among the young people of Bakersfield.

RS: Was she a student in the college?

Bird: Yes, in 1920-1922. She graduated in June, 1922. Her name was then Georgia App. Her family were people that were quick of mind and warm of heart. Georgia had so much more to her than almost any young person whom I had yet had a chance to meet. She had a very alert mind; she was a brilliant student, and she had spunk. She was full of, "Well, let's solve it anyway." She thought there was no problem that couldn't be solved, and so she would solve it. She did this in a variety of situations. There might be some difficulty with having a parade downtown or achieving something else that the college was trying to use to generate more enthusiasm on the part of the public. A parade was about the best means of making the general public look at you. So, Georgia, who drove a little four cylinder Dodge, would say, "Come on Larry"--Larry was a collie that belonged to Mr. Ludden--and together they would go downtown and come back with a permit for a parade. She achieved almost everything just saying, "Well, there's no reason why we can't do that." She achieved the more difficult things because they were in the interests of the underdog or in the interests of the person who was being deprived otherwise of something. She was for everyone who seemed not to have an adequate advocate. She would become that advocate.

RS: She sounds wonderful.

Bird: Her features were quite handsome, but her beauty came out of this spirit which was so alive inside of her and which would come out in the rosiest apple cheeks you ever saw. She had a beautiful complexion, and I think this was one of the things that made it seem that something from within was shining out. At any rate, she was a very unusual young woman, and she became a very longtime devoted friend of mine.

After finishing her education she married W.B. (Bill) Camp and lived on the experimental farm where their two sons were born. Shortly afterwards Bill was called to serve in the Department of Agriculture under Henry Wallace. Georgia's children were both born while they were on the experimental farm. They then went east. When they came back, the boys were much larger; I don't know their exact ages. They were in high school when Georgia died. When Georgia died, I went at once to the house.

Bill Camp has been a very, very loyal friend to me all my life; he is himself so generous as a man who can do things because he has a great deal of money now. He wants to do them, and he does do them. And these are things such as building for a young woman, Betty Morris, who had been in the college and whom I knew very well, a house with a studio attached when he found that she had been

Bird: stricken with polio. He not only built the home and the studio from which she could broadcast, but he sent her with a companion to Los Angeles for lessons with a very fine teacher of voice so as to enlarge her voice, so as to give her more assurance.

When I left Bakersfield, which was some years after that, Bill had a party for my closest friends, a very large party, and it was a surprise for me, not that I was going to the party, but that the singer would be Betty O'Brien Morris.

RS: How moving.

Bird: And Betty Morris sang and one of my friends had asked me a few days before, "You do an awful lot of singing around the house; what's your favorite song?" I said, "You really want to know?" And she said, "Yes." Because I don't sing my favorite song out loud to anybody, but my favorite song is "Who is Sylvia?" from Shakespeare--Two Gentlemen of Verona. And set to music by Schubert. So, Betty O'Brien sang "Who is Sylvia?". So, that really was a surprise. Of course, I knew I was going to a dinner party, but I didn't know how large it was going to be.

This is just to say that our friendship has persisted. But another thing that shows Bill's generosity--he told me that he would like to give a gift to the institution. This was when the college's separate buildings were across the street from the high school and we still used some buildings that were on the high school campus. All new building during the war had been prevented by use of steel. At any rate, he came and talked to me about it, and I suggested that he give a pipe organ to the auditorium which both the college and the high school used, and which was the only auditorium in the city of Bakersfield to hold a large number of people.

RS: So it was a gift to the community.

Bird: He presented the organ to the high school, and there was a very moving dedication; the man who was the best known organist in America came out to play and dedicate the organ. Bill made the gift with all the generosity in the world--no limitation on costs or anything, but a decision on the part of musicians and Dr. Knudsen from UCLA, who was the professional adviser for institutions for sound, so that the organ sound would be right for the auditorium, and neither overdone or underdone; the number of pipes and so on would be the result of a decision of people who were specialists in the field.

RS: It's good to have Bill Camp's good deeds recorded here.

Student Activities

Bird: I should like now to tell about the out-of-class activities on campus and in the community during this decade. I think of the Twenties as a period of great energy, exciting drive, and bursting imaginations. The faculty and the students had the buoyancy of youth. Growth in enrollment had not yet brought us to a large student population (about fifty students in 1921 to four hundred or more in 1929), but the future was promising. Here are some of the students' accomplishments in spite of the small size of the college. They published a quite mature weekly paper that they named The Scrutinizer and a college annual named The Scorpion. The students interested in the theater took part in two full-length plays each year and a few short ones all directed by Ethel Robinson, the new drama teacher. I persuaded twenty-five talented men students to present a revival of an old-fashioned minstrel show in 1926, and I wrote the script for it. One of the very funny endmen, Willis Bouchey, has since made a success of acting in radio and television.

We didn't neglect sports. In 1924, 1925, and for the rest of the Twenties we had football teams coached by our scholarly Lynn Ryan, who had taken Mr. Spindt's former college classes in political science and economics, and was now assisted by Mr. Spindt as a voluntary assistant coach. We rarely exceeded twenty players on our entire squad, yet we rarely lost a game.

Morris Chain, now a well known attorney in Bakersfield, organized a rooting section of men students known as the "Howling Fifty." Because of our very limited student body budget, we could not afford real band uniforms, so the band wore white pants and maroon sweat shirts, and so did the "Howling Fifty," who entertained at half-time. Need I add that the sports program soon included basketball, track, and baseball. Morris Chain dubbed the teams "Renegades" and the name stuck.

Clubs in special fields also took root and blossomed. Kappa Rho Sigma, the science club, contributed many fine specimens to the historical geology collection. Alpha Nu Sigma, an international relations group, worked on improving race relations among students and sometimes entertained foreign visitors and guest artists. I recall a delightful party they gave for Dorothy Maynor after her concert for the Music Association. I remember also the French club, Les Hiboux Français, nicknamed Lazy Boos, giving a fine production of the last act of Cyrano de Bergerac in French.

RS: You yourself took part in drama productions in the community, didn't you?

Bird: Yes. I produced three plays for the Women's Club in the Twenties: one, Oscar Wilde's delightful The Importance of Being Earnest, which was being given as an invitational affair to celebrate the occupation of the new club house; another, The Man Who Married A Dumb Wife (from Anatole France), in which Mrs. Dwight Clarke played the wife. The third play was Susan Glaspell's Suppressed Desires. Professor Samuel J. Hume, then director of theater arts at the University of California, Berkeley, consented to come down to Bakersfield to play the husband, thus insuring an unusual success for an amateur production.

A Summary of the Accomplishments of the Twenties

RS: Would you like to summarize the accomplishments of the Twenties?

Bird: Yes, I would. The faculty and the administration believed deeply in the philosophy that brought about the extension of local (regional) public education through the fourteenth grade. We were proud of the roles we might fill in such a democratic institution.

We recognized that one of our clear functions was to maintain courses of study so full-bodied and teaching of such high quality that the students who wished to complete their bachelor degrees in four-year institutions would be very well prepared to do so.

We recognized that another function was to offer curricula in agriculture, business, industry, and in semi-professional fields in science, art, and letters as needs developed.

We had already learned that our students varied rather widely in interests and aptitudes and that our subject offerings and teaching methods would have to take those differences into account.

We learned--oh, so fully--that a college whose faculty and administration work together sincerely toward the richest learning response from its students in subject fields and in qualities of character becomes a vigorous and fruitful and happy institution and can communicate its vigor and life-giving qualities to the community.

V BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE IN THE THIRTIES

Effects of the Depression on the College

Bird: I'd like to talk about the effects of the Depression of the Thirties on Bakersfield College. The Thirties came in with the Depression and the gray swirl of the great dust bowls. Both brought their new claims on local colleges. The Depression raised unemployment locally as well as nationally. The dust bowls, particularly from the Southwest, sent treks of farm workers and others who were newly dispossessed on the roads to California.

RS: What changes did that bring about in the college?

Bird: The Depression brought at once an unusual increase in students from our own district. Some of these were students who had expected to go to four-year colleges as freshmen. Others came because no gainful employment was available, and they thought it was better to improve their preparation for employment while awaiting an opening.

The families of many of these students believed they could still support them at home. Some students, however, felt they would have to find part-time work to help pay a share of their own support.

RS: What was your response to the situation?

Bird: The first step was to see if the district budget could supply enough funds to provide graduates of our own district high schools with part-time work that would enable them to contribute something to their support at home.

RS: Were you successful?

Bird: In part. Then came more help from the National Recovery Act of President Franklin Roosevelt's administration. This was 1933, I think. Through the National Youth Administration we received an

Bird: allocation of funds to employ several students (I don't remember how many), provided we employed them to do jobs we would not otherwise have.

RS: What kind of jobs did you make?

Bird: My office employed three statistical clerks who assembled all the data needed to show the persistence and withdrawal record of all students registered in Bakersfield College since fall, 1924; their academic record as it related to persistence and withdrawal, and also as it related to the pattern of courses and grades in their high school years, etc., etc. (For every year thereafter we had a regularly budgeted position to keep many of such data up to date.)

We had other types of clerical workers for which our regular budget could not provide; science and shop clean-up workers; readers for large social studies courses; helpers in physical education.

RS: Would you describe the changes in the source of students?

Bird: Until the Depression nearly 80% of our students came from Kern County. The Depression and dust bowl years changed that to 60% from Kern County and 40% from out-of-district high schools.

RS: How was the academic preparation of your new entrants?

Bird: The early in-migrants from the Midwest came from families who had lost their prosperous farms when the dust took over. Later the dust bowls of the Southwest sent students from rural areas whose schools had been maintained for relatively few months a year. Such students were behind their counterparts in California. But now, at least, they had a local college that could serve them. They would not be left on the streets.

We asked most of these students from other states to write a little biographical note for us about their backgrounds since we already knew the students from our own county. Their response was lively. One of the brief essays came from a bright and attractive young woman. She wrote that her family never had anything because their father always thought there was something brighter just beyond the horizon, and they had been moving, moving, moving.

RS: That feeling there is better land further west is very much an American phenomenon.

Bird: But the young woman had written, "I know that the horizon has not been reached for my father." [Laughter.]

RS: To what extent was the situation in Bakersfield representative of other California junior colleges?

Bird: I examined the U.S. Census for 1930 and found that although the population in the seventeen- to twenty-one-year age group showed that more than half this age group was unemployed in the six comparable states I studied. California showed that only one-third of the group was unemployed. One-third was employed and one-third was in school or college.

This seemed to point to a community or regional service of California's post-high school education that was a buffer against adversity.

RS: How did the increased enrollment affect the curriculum?

Bird: In various ways. A major way was to strengthen some of our offerings by enlarging the give-and-take in classes with larger enrollments. This applied particularly to classes designed for the fourteenth grade in which enrollments had been quite small. Other effects were additions to the pre-major requirements for transfer to four-year colleges and universities and the newer community-oriented courses.

And, of course, there were new technological developments in America that had begun to influence our lives that called for trainees and experts in large numbers. Aviation, for example.

RS: What proportion of the student body were these students from the Southwest?

Bird: The new entrants from Arizona, Oklahoma, and Texas constituted only about 10% of our total enrollment, but they were approximately one-third of the new entrants from out-of-state through the early Thirties.

Because the largest number had come from Oklahoma, the refugees all came to be referred to as "Okies," a term used in a derogatory way. But the term "Okie" did not mean for us at the college anyone unworthy. He was just another American youth who needed our help and compassion.

RS: There was a great controversy in 1939 in Bakersfield which resulted in the burning and banning of The Grapes of Wrath from the public schools. Did it include the junior college?

Bird: Steinbeck's book was not removed from the college library. I think the controversy had little effect in the college except a regret that book-burning had been used as a mechanism of protest. You see,

Bird: a college faculty is never against a man who is down, uprooted, unemployed, and yet who still has hopes as had the majority of the in-migrants from the dust bowls.

At the same time, we knew that very bad things had happened to some of our best citizens. One of these was Hugh Jewett. I hope the Oral History Project is including an interview with him.

RS: Tell me about him and what happened to him.

Bird: He is an agriculturist with farm lands not far from the large Di Giorgio farms. He belongs to a family of early settlers in Kern County. It was a family of education and means. No one has done more for people than Hugh Jewett. He has been generous all his life with money, service, time, and advice--one of our finest citizens.

He went out to his farm property one day and was knocked down and clubbed by the people who were fighting the Di Giorgio owners and other farm land owners. The community was incensed. There was talk of arming citizens to patrol such properties. Cooler heads prevailed. No radical action was taken. Later many of us came to believe that the violence had come from labor agitators and their flunkies who had come along with the later refugees to organize farm workers.

I do not know what proportion were truly dust bowlers or only dust bowlers by design. Doubtless there were some of both, but most of the true refugees who had been dust-driven from their homes had reached a peak a few years earlier.

RS: Did this change the attitude of the community toward the newcomers?

Bird: In a way, toward those who were just arriving. A more cautious attitude prevailed. But this did not apply to the earlier arrivals who had already begun to establish themselves in our area. For these there was a persisting warm feeling.

Administering the College

RS: As the college adjusted to the new situation, the role of the chief executive officer must have been crucial. I wonder if you would talk about your view of your role?

Bird: I'll try. Let me see if I can summarize my own points of view of the basic purposes of administration in education, for these amount to a philosophy, even a credo.

Bird: 1. I believe that the basic function of administration is to provide the best possible environment it can for the classroom to achieve the high goals education hopes to achieve.

2. I believe the heart of the institution is "the learning process." This heart lies in the center of a circle which has within it the subject matter, the student, and the teacher.

3. I believe the president and any assistant administrators are there to expedite the learning process and to protect it from within and from without.

4. If the institution is a public community college in which the student population represents the whole range of abilities and talents found in the community, I believe the president must insure that reliable data are assembled about the degree to which each student possesses at entrance the basic learning skills of reading and communication in English, of reasoning, of use of numbers, and, in some cases, of manual dexterity.

RS: Selecting good teachers is also a crucial part of the president's role, isn't it?

Bird: 5. I believe the teachers should be selected with great care, but, once selected, they should be given their own heads and the president's faith and allowed to teach with minimum extra demands and with their own creative minds.

6. I believe a continuing function of administration is evaluation of the institution's progress toward its stated purposes including each teacher's evaluation of himself in terms of those purposes.

7. I believe the president should make a deeply sincere effort to create and maintain a spirit of good will throughout his campus and between his campus and the community.

Well, there it is. Not a decalogue, but a sort of septalogue for community college leaders. I have tried to keep it related to educating people and not to the financial support of education.

RS: Would you talk about the relationship of the president of the college to the superintendent of the district?

Bird: I served with three different superintendents for whom I have nothing but praise. Herman Spindt was endowed with wisdom, foresight, and compassion far above average. I could tell a score of incidents where he helped financially new young members of the high school faculty who were on the lower levels of the salary

Bird: scale whenever they faced emergencies or illness. For me, his view about a candidate for a teaching position sometimes won me over, and I found out why when that person became an outstanding member of the college faculty. Since most of the new teachers employed in the college before the mid-Thirties came while Mr. Spindt was our district superintendent, you can guess how great was my debt to him and how everlasting my appreciation.

RS: Thomas Nelson and Theron McCuen, the other two superintendents, were also supportive of your administration of the college, although their style and values were different, I understand. Would you talk about that?

Bird: Thomas Nelson was a rule-by-the-book man. Almost his first act was to assemble from the board minutes of meetings at least as far back as the Twenties all statements of policies, all regulations, and statements of such practices as were still being followed. These were classified and made the basis of an administrative code. Additions, deletions, and revisions were then made before the code was adopted.

But he was not exclusively a man of rules. He was community-conscious too. He sought to bring together the people of the community and those of the secondary schools and the college by presenting a huge pageant of Kern County history. Hundreds took part in it one way or another. It evoked applause from all areas.

RS: Did he help you in the selection of new teachers as Mr. Spindt had?

Bird: Mr. Nelson left the selection of teachers for the college to me. After making the choice I thought to be the right one, I always took (or sent) the candidate to Mr. Nelson's office to meet him.

Theron McCuen was appointed district superintendent when Dr. Nelson accepted the appointment of superintendent of the Berkeley Unified School District about 1945. Mr. McCuen had already been serving as an associate superintendent with Dr. Nelson and had a full grasp of the business affairs of the district and the tax rates its people could support.

His educational philosophy was closer to Mr. Spindt's, and I think he was sympathetic to my "septologue." He was the kind of man one finds in the term "gentleman." As I observed him over the next few years, I became certain that he was one of the two or three outstanding school administrators in the state.

RS: Did he leave the selection of new college teachers to you?

Bird: Yes, but he always met the candidate and endorsed him before we offered him a contract.

Selecting Teachers

RS: How did you go about selecting teachers?

Bird: If we were planning to employ a teacher new to our district, our first step would be to notify teacher placement offices in universities and colleges whose services we had used in the past. We knew them, and they knew us and our institution and a good deal about our community.

RS: Which were these universities?

Bird: Several campuses of the University of California, Stanford, University of Southern California, and the state colleges which had strong programs of teaching in junior college occupational curricula. Because these institutions knew us rather well, there would have been a preliminary winnowing of potential candidates before any professional papers were sent to us.

Of course, if other candidates or other institutions wished to have professional papers sent, we gave those papers conscientious consideration. I read all the papers with great care and over a few days I arranged them in an order of choice and studied the papers again. This time I narrowed the choice to two (sometimes three) and invited these candidates to come for interviews. The last step was to make the choice.

And let me not fail to tell you that one of our very best sources for new teachers for the college was Bakersfield High School just across the street from us. We knew these young people far better than any interview could tell us, but we did not use this source without prior conference with the principal.

RS: When the candidate would be new to the district, how much weight did the interview carry compared with the papers from the placement office?

Bird: The professional papers would have carried all the weight up to the point of the interview and would have left us only to choose between two or three good people--very good people, I might say.

RS: Can you tell what factors brought about your decision?

Bird: Well, making a judgment is a complex of a number of things in me: my experiences, my learnings, my sense of values, my awareness, the norms or standards one observes personally and those which have been attested to in the letters in the professional papers.



Bird: I prefer to say "inferential" rather than "intuitive," since intuition implies something not reasoned, something a little mystical, and I think my judgment is inferred from repeated experience.

RS: What qualities did you look for?

Bird: Well, here are some in addition to or in support of qualities noted in the professional papers. I believe the first thing I hope to find is a happy heart.

The second thing is some evidence of imagination or apperception, and I also hope to note an instinct to be observant. I hope very much to see evidence of a deep-down desire on the part of the candidate to remain a scholar in his own field, especially in the realm of the sciences including math; in the constantly expanding technical institute fields (computer science, electronics, automotive, ad infinitum); but also in political science and the political uses of economics.

As you will have guessed during our several conversations, I also hoped that all new teachers would have a deep respect for the English language and help enlarge it in their students too. I think you would be interested in knowing that one of our new English teachers in the Thirties was Bonaro Wilkinson Overstreet, a creative writer who taught and preached love of our native tongue.

There was one economic factor that had to be weighed when two equally strong candidates were still being considered. The younger candidate could be employed at lesser salary than the older one with experience. Never was I refused the appointment of anyone because of his age, however.

RS: Oh, that was the Bonaro Overstreet who with her husband, Harry Overstreet, wrote the best-seller, The Mature Mind. As your staff was increasing during these years, did teachers move up into administrative posts?

Bird: Yes, and I had the advantage of some key selections from within the district. With the consent of the district superintendent, I "robbed" Bakersfield High School of two of its outstanding young people to become the college's dean of men and dean of women. Florence McKinley had been chairman of the high school physical education department and already knew many of the young women in the college as well as high school seniors headed for the college. Moreover, she was a proven teacher, a person of charm and good judgment, and an instinctively kind and gracious woman.

Robert Wright, our new dean of men, was one of the persons being groomed for an administrative post in the district. He was a young man of sound integrity, warm personality, and drive. He was a good speaker and full of promise.

Developing the Curriculum

RS: From speaking about teachers, it is a natural step to turn to what they teach and to the curriculum in which it is taught. Did you ever codify the philosophy of education you hoped would permeate the college?

Bird: That is not an easy thing to give structure to. We discussed our goals from time to time for the sake of our common belief in them. Early in the Twenties we discussed the then commonly enunciated cardinal principles of public education: adequate mastery of the English language, spoken and written; informed and participating citizenship; loyalty to sound moral principles; occupational competence; maintenance of good health habits and knowledge of valid health information; worthy home life; enhanced understanding and appreciation of the higher values of life. We agreed they were good.

RS: Weren't these adopted nationwide?

Bird: Yes, by the secondary school administrators. I have changed the wording a little to make them more applicable to the junior college age group.

The faculty accepted the goals and began to think how they might make their subject field and their way of teaching help reach the goals. For my part, I began to think of qualitative aims and not alone of the behavior goals.

RS: What was your overriding aim?

Bird: A conscious pursuit of excellence. This applied to the teacher as well as the student. I believe respect for excellence and a desire to move toward it can be created in the classroom, respect for it particularly on the part of the student by the teacher's holding him to an increasingly finer and more mature performance as he progresses through his four semesters.

RS: That sounds like an inspiring and also a useful and solid thing to do.

Bird: I think that all educators believe that education is an evolving process and that something a little better can come out of what was yesterday. We believe educational evolution can be in the direction of goodness. So we tried throughout the institution to develop a feeling for excellence and goodness on the part of the students. Then out of this feeling, the teacher could help them to realize and to want to achieve some of the intermediate steps that would provide immediate satisfactions and also be on the road to excellence.

Bird: But now we must turn to the other basic consideration that was ours because we were a community college open to all high school graduates and all persons over twenty-one and even those high school dropouts over eighteen if the president believed they should be admitted.

This meant that the college had a student population that represented as wide a spread of talents, abilities, educational backgrounds, etc., as the general population. The kinds and levels of learnings in the curriculum and any adjustments in the teaching methods would have to be given major consideration.

RS: Well, now we have returned to the assimilation of the in-migrants from the southwest states. Can you tell me what some of the changes were that came about in curriculum* and methods?

Bird: It was not alone the in-migrant whose needs brought the modifications. Some graduates from our own district had planned to go to work after their graduation. They were still strongly motivated vocationally but were less well prepared in academic fields than the average college entrant. Thus the prescriptions in the education code for graduation from a junior college would need to have alternate ways of being met.

RS: What were the education code's prescriptions?

Bird: In my time the specified learnings were these: an acceptable level of English; a minimum of two units in American history and institutions; health and physical education. To meet the English requirement, we first gave a classifying examination called English X. Depending on the results, the student would either qualify for English IA if he passed or be assigned to English 50 or Business English 51A if he failed. What we found out was that we needed a section of English 51 primarily for those planning on majors in the technical arts.

English 50, by the way, went through different designations. English A was one. English 50 emphasized expository writing: sentence structure, exposition, spelling, and punctuation. Business English 51A emphasized skills to be used by secretaries, office clerks, receptionists, store clerks, etc. English 51 included speaking and writing, vocabulary building, precision in technical language. Actually, as I remember it, we called the first course in all occupational curricula 51A without discrimination, except in the arrangement in the schedule which placed most industrial majors in the same sections and business and agriculture majors in other sections. It was these types of students for whom we had to do the most.

RS: What did you do about the health and physical education?

Bird: From almost no alternate choices in the mid-Twenties except men's organized team sports, we had been enlarging the number of choices to include swimming, archery, volleyball, tennis, dance, golf, and perhaps some I don't remember. We had a very strong course in hygiene for women that's chief attention was given to marriage, child bearing, and guarding health in the home.

The instructor, Hazel C. Aldrich (Mrs. Vern Aldrich) was a biological science major who had twice had maternity leaves of absence. She won high praise from her students as did the instructor who followed her and later became dean of women at Shasta College, Marva Notestine.

RS: What is the history of the requirement in American history and institutions?

Bird: This requirement is of utmost importance to the basic goal we have identified as citizenship. Public education's function is dual, for it exists to protect and enhance the state and to teach and enrich the individual. When I say the state, I mean American democratic society as it is represented by the community, the state, and the nation. This is a society pledged to the beliefs written into our constitution and the ideals we have inherited from the best in our history.

The college sought to help the students become responsible members of that society while they also became persons of greater self-fulfillment. At the college level we sought to do so with young people of varied interests and kinds of abilities.

Until the Thirties the college course in American history and government had been the means of fulfilling the code requirement. Now, however, we concluded that while retaining that course, some students would be served better by one or the other of two alternative offerings.

RS: How did you develop these?

Bird: Well, I initiated discussions by asking Mr. Ewert and Mr. McDaniel to meet with me to talk over what I thought was a growing need and to make some suggestion that might be worth examining.

RS: Will you tell us something about these two men? In some of our pre-interview chats you have spoken very highly of them.

Bird: I doubt that I could speak highly enough. For with Theron Taber, who was my right hand in administrative affairs, these two men were other arms of academic support. I usually referred to William ("Van" for Van Vliet) Ewert as my right hand for academic affairs. He was recognized as a serious scholar in his own field

Bird: (European history and U.S. constitution) and as the strongest and most admired of teachers. There was no department that did not recognize his worth. When he entered naval duty in World War II, I knew he would be dean of the faculty when he returned.

J.W. McDaniel (Mac) was another profound scholar in his field, psychology. He became one of the state's finest officers in student personnel work. He also developed the required freshman course in orientation (one hour per week). In the first semester the students discovered their own academic characteristics and the characteristics of the occupation or profession they hoped to enter. The second semester was an original approach in orientation to the world which he called "Experimental Ways of Looking at the World." His speakers described the world through the eyes of a geologist, an anthropologist, a biologist, a physicist, a sociologist, a moralist, a banker, an idealist. In the final lecture he, as a teacher, synthesized the various points of view. Quite a person, wasn't he?

RS: Yes, indeed.

Bird: Later he became president of San Bernardino Valley College.

Well, in my meeting with these two men, I suggested that the data I had assembled for the preceding two years on aptitude and proficiency tests of our students seemed to indicate that we needed to have three types of courses if we were to be more likely to reach the goal of education for citizenship on the junior college level.

RS: What types of courses?

Bird: Well, Mr. McDaniel told us that the data he had processed for the new students who had just entered resembled closely those of the preceding years except that the distribution skewed a little more toward the lower level. After a good deal more discussion, we reached the conclusion that we should offer two new types of courses and seek some revisions in the existing course in American history and government. One of the new types would be addressed to students with high verbal skills, high academic ability, and some talent and pleasure in abstract thinking. The content of the course would be based upon our constitution as a living document as illustrated by decisions of the Supreme Court. Mr. Ewert was responsible for this proposal.

The other type of course would be based on either immediate or recurring problems in American life such as unemployment, foreign policy, citizenship ethics and responsibility, crime, conservation, and so on. The method used stressed reliable sources to help inform one's judgment.

RS: Were revisions made in the traditional courses?

Bird: Mr. Ewert, as chairman of the department of social studies, conferred with the teachers in American history and political science who then made their own revisions in terms of participation and by emphasis on the serious current American issues.

RS: How were students distributed to the several courses?

Bird: Each student had the right to choose any one of the courses designed to meet the education code. However, the curricula outlined in the general catalogue recommended a particular course and a particular year (freshman or sophomore) in which to be taken. Sometimes the counselor suggested a particular course from his knowledge of the particular student.

RS: How successful were these courses?

Bird: Oh, it was my opinion that as developed by our faculty, these courses were searchlights along the paths of our goals. Some other junior colleges who learned of them asked us for more information. However, the course in American problems as designed by Mr. Ewert called for continuous time for preparation and for extra help for students that only a teacher as dedicated as he would regard as part of the normal teacher load.

The other problem was that the students in technology majors are so vocationally-minded they wanted to pursue only the vocational training. The desire to graduate from the college did not overcome this, although shifting the requirement to the sophomore year occasionally did because of their increased maturity.

RS: Now I know you have gone to this much detail to illustrate your care in having the curriculum designed in terms of student characteristics. Did you also develop new community-oriented occupational curricula?

Bird: Yes. Some were expansions; others were newly organized. Let me just mention them without going into why or how. In agriculture, for example, we offered three strong curricula in farm management, animal science, and plant science that embraced the regularly established basic college courses in chemistry, botany, and zoology and field work being conducted on family farms or the district farm by three excellent teachers: Howard K. Dickson (management), Harry L. Holmes (horticulture), and John L. Knight (animal husbandry). Although the students enrolling in our agriculture courses did not expect to transfer, we found that this plan advanced the student toward the bachelor degree.

RS: You established still other occupational curricula that were community-oriented during this decade, I believe.

Bird: Yes, one in police officer training that was a response to Chief Robert Powers' desire to upgrade his own staff. Thus it was not a pre-training program, but one to accompany the police in-training of recruits and to upgrade those already on the force. Chief Powers described some of the things he hoped might be included in what we would teach. I invited Prof. Smith, at that time the chairman of the four-year police program at San Jose State College, to spend a day on our campus during which he could speak at the weekly assembly hour of students and confer with those on the faculty who would be teaching the courses to meet the needs outlined by Chief Powers and with Chief Powers himself. Miss Marion Peairs (later Mrs. Edward West) became teacher of the special English course which included public speaking and the course in police-citizen relations. She served as coordinator of the program with Chief Powers and his successor Chief Grayson. A special course in psychology was introduced by Dr. Arthur Tait. Miss Peairs performed miracles. The Sheriff asked to have his men enrolled also.

RS: Kern County is well known for its oil fields. Did the college do anything special in petroleum education?

Bird: For the person seeking a university degree in petroleum engineering or geology, curricula were available from the early Twenties. The recurring discovery of new deposits kept enrollments in these professional fields high.

It was not until the Thirties that our local area offices of oil industry began calling on us for students who could fill middle-level occupations between the professional and the trade levels. They had been recruiting young people after two years with us in a transfer curriculum in geology or chemistry, for example, and found them successful after some apprentice training. After conferring with the head of an oil company with fields in our county and with District Superintendent Nelson, we set out to recruit a person with the academic background and the experience in the oil fields to develop the laboratory field work that pointed to employment on the technical institute level. We found him in John Van Osdel. The curriculum was launched with Mr. Van Osdel serving as teacher and coordinator with the oil industry (Standard, Associated, Golden Bear, Shell).

I, myself, conferred with the faculty who were teaching our courses in technical math, technical chemistry, technical physics; for these courses were already part of other industrial curricula. You have heard of the thoroughbred race horse who starts running as soon as the bit is in his mouth. These were Edwin Hemmerling and Norman Harris who developed the courses in technical mathematics,

Bird: chemistry, and physics. Their textbooks in these fields were of such high quality and usefulness, they are widely used in community colleges throughout the country. My praise for them as creative and unusually strong teachers and as enthusiastic and cooperating members of a group is very great indeed. The evidence of their worth was also shown in the high standards they maintained and the respect of students they earned in teaching university-level courses in mathematics and science.

Change in Name from Junior College to Community College

RS: I have noticed in these interviews that you have used the words "junior" and "community" interchangeably. Will you tell something about the changes that were taking place in titles for the institution and its chief administrator?

Bird: Before the end of the Twenties we had discussed several times at our annual meetings the desirability of changing the name to "community college" or "regional college." However, we took no overt action in seeking it.

RS: For what reason?

Bird: Well, we knew that the word "junior" did not preclude our giving as many locally-oriented courses as we believed we should have. Many of us did fear, however, that seeking a name change might be construed as a willingness to desert our common school birthright and try to extend beyond the fourteenth grade in favor of the higher education family even at the loss of constitutionally guaranteed state support.

But this did not stop our grumbling. So again in the Thirties the matter came before our State Association. Several junior colleges in unified city districts were already calling themselves "city colleges" and still others were calling themselves just plain "college." A motion to have the name changed from "junior" to "community" in the education code brought unexpected opposition from those communities in Southern California with fairly large populations of right-wingers. They thought the word "community" suggested communism, and their people would reject it. Shades of John Birch and Joe McCarthy! Would you believe it! So the motion was withdrawn, and we were back at the starter's mark.

It was about this time that I received an invitation to meet with the State Board of Education. I do not recall the year, but the state superintendent of schools was Dr. Vierling Kersey. I

Bird: took along a diagrammatic statement of the relation of the individual junior college to its state association, to the State Board and the Department of Education, and I also took a one-page outline of the junior college functions. I had decided I would present my views regarding a change of name if they were requested.

RS: And they doubtless were. Did you suggest a change in the education code?

Bird: I suggested no change in the code. I believed it to be extremely important that there be unanimity among the junior colleges first since any change would become permanent. My proposal was one that could be temporary or permanent depending on final decisions of the colleges themselves. It was quite simple: first, drop the word "junior" from the title and from popular use; second, carry a subtitle on the title page of the college catalogue which would clarify the purpose of the particular college. Examples: "a two-year public college," or, "a public community college," or, "a public city college," or even other variations that might be special cases such as, "a public technical college."

RS: Did the State Board of Education act on your suggestions?

Bird: I don't know. I feel sure Dr. Kersey reported them to the persons in the State Department of Education concerned. No change, however, came about in the education code until The California Master Plan in the Sixties. The Restudy of Higher Education (1956) had led to the establishment of a Bureau of Junior College Education in the State Department of Education. I was by then no longer a junior college president.

Changes in the Title of Chief Administrator

RS: That takes us to the name changes undergone by the chief administrator office.

Bird: I think I could describe them briefly. Under the first enabling act for junior colleges, 1910, when the junior college was a department of the high school, the title "dean" was used. This persisted even when the dean functioned as president except for responsibilities to a district superintendent in matters of finance and coordination. During these years, the high school principal in California's smaller districts may have represented his junior college in state affairs, and the junior college on the 6-4-4 plan called their chief administrator "principal." To compound the confusion the Southern California junior colleges voted to use the title "director" and asked us to join them. So, now we had four titles all describing the same office: dean, principal, superintendent, director.

RS: How was it resolved?

Bird: Well, not by official action but by popular use. When the unified city districts used a fifth title, "president," the domino theory proved its worth. The other titles fell, and the chief administrators who had always performed as presidents now were called "president."

Some Recollections of Professional and Community Activities

RS: As president of Bakersfield College for nearly thirty years, you must have experienced many high points.

Bird: One of the most gratifying things that happened to Bakersfield College in the Thirties was a call from the director of the Huntington Library, Dr. Bliss. He and a librarian from an Eastern college wanted to visit Bakersfield with a representative of the Carnegie Foundation. There was no previous correspondence. They just arrived out of the blue.

I had a rather long hour of talk about the junior college movement, our philosophy at Bakersfield, etc. They asked to visit the college library which was then housed in the basement of the junior college building. They wanted to browse among the book shelves. Well, to wind up the story, we learned we were one of three junior colleges in California to be awarded a three-year grant from the Carnegie Foundation to purchase books for the college library.

When I asked why we had been chosen to receive the grant, I was told that, while our library was not large, the books on our shelves were the most significant ones to have in their particular fields, that our most recent selections were excellent, and that we kept no dead wood on the shelves just to make our book collection look larger. I was also told that the committee of three had liked what I had said in our hour's talk when I was unaware of the purpose of the call at that time.

RS: What an honor for you and for Bakersfield College.

Bird: Yes. I cheered for our librarian Goldie Ingles and those faculty members who had been making the recommendations for library purchases in recent years. I'd like to tell of a minor event that was related to the library story and also a postlude to the influx of the refugees from the Depression and dust bowls.

Bird: I received a telephone call one morning (in 1938, I think) from the airport. It was the librarian of Stephens College, Missouri. He had learned of our Carnegie grant and said he'd like to come out and look over our book stock and visit with me. I told him that I, myself, would come to pick him up. Did I tell you he was flying his own plane? Not as common then as now.

In returning to the campus, I drove him past many small homes of former dust bowl refugees and other Depression victims. He said, pointing to a little freshly painted house with flowers growing in the yard, "You mean that house?" I nodded my yes. We continued our drive past several other houses--small vegetable gardens in the back yards, flowers in the front yards, windows with little dotted Swiss curtains or bright prints of some sort. He said, "It is unbelievable, unbelievable!" The people inside had not been there very long, and they had done all the work themselves, but they were putting down new roots and creating new homes. For him it was a disproof of Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath.

RS: You were also active in community life at this time--as an organizer of the Music Association, for instance.

Bird: I've been thinking of a very amusing story known only to a few of us. I was chairman of the Music Association's reception committee for the artists that year. This involved meeting them on arrival, arranging for dinner before or after the concert as they might wish, seeing that stage arrangements and lighting were what they wanted, and so on. We used the Fox Theater for the concerts. The Music Association was presenting the Metropolitan Opera Quartette that particular night. Many people will remember them--Rose Bampton (soprano), Katherine Meisle (mezzo), Charles Kuhlman (tenor), Robert Weede (baritone). Elva Dimon and I met them at the train. Because the club car in which they were riding was a long way from the depot, they started waving as we walked toward them. Soon we were all waving and skipping as we neared one another. We took them to their hotel, and I made arrangements for a fresh salad to be sent to their rooms.

Later in the afternoon I took Miss Bampton and Mr. Kuhlman to indicate their wishes about stage arrangements. Mr. Kuhlman told me that a former roommate of his at Yale now lived in Pixley, and he would appreciate my making arrangements for him to be admitted by the stage door. My own last act before we left the theater for the hotel again was to rub off the thumb and finger marks from the piano left on it by the stagehands.

I sat in my regular seat for the concert. During the progress of the performance, Mr. Kuhlman sang a group of tenor solos. After a storm of applause he bowed to the audience and then to the right

Bird: off-stage. He repeated this after each of his solo numbers. "Ah," thought I, "his friend from Pixley has arrived."

However, when I went backstage at the end of the concert, there was no Yale man in sight. I learned from Ethel Robinson, who had been at the switchboard, that the members of the Quartette had discovered the trundle which carries the letters used on the marquee. As Mr. Kuhlman completed each solo to audience applause, they were spelling with the large letters their impression of his performance with such words as "lousy" and "ouch!" and, for a love song, "ugh, mush!"

RS: Grand opera singers clowning around. How amusing.

Bird: They were all in fine fettle and excellent voice, and the audience responded with sustained applause. When we delivered them to their hotel, they said, "We've never had such fun at a concert. Bakersfield is a wonderful audience."

RS: Bakersfield is a community responsive to the arts. You were also involved in the Community Theater, weren't you?

Bird: My anecdote of the early days of the Community Theater is just as delightful but in a different vein. You will remember that I have spoken of Dwight Clarke as one of the founders of the Music Association. His profession was banking. He was vice-president and manager of the local branch of the Bank of America. As such he was a dignified community leader well known throughout the county.

In the privacy of his home he was also a writer. In the days of which I am speaking he was trying his hand at playwriting. He wrote a play with allegorical overtones which Mrs. Campbell wanted to produce and use his name as author in the advance publicity. His reply when she asked him was, "Heavens, no! There would be a run on the bank!" [Laughter.]

RS: Was it part of the pioneer quality still present in Bakersfield that made people feel that a writer was too risky a choice to be manager of a bank?

Bird: In part, but also, in part, to the American tradition of the "he-man" as the ideal—a sort of John Wayne syndrome.

RS: Did Mr. Clarke continue his writing?

Bird: Yes. He remained in banking as a profession, but he wrote two brilliantly researched books about two men who played early roles in the history of California: Steven Watts Kearny and William Tecumseh Sherman: Gold Rush Banker.

RS: Your anecdotes illustrate that Bakersfield had become a community of stimulating cultural opportunities.

Bird: Yes, and of activities of increasing depth in maturity. I think it was in the Thirties that Mr. Alfred Harrell and some friends founded the Quest Club of about twenty-five of our serious thinkers to discuss and study various large issues as well as some local ones. Even the young adult clubs began also to wrestle with social issues. A sense of being "grown-up" permeated the community. This was reflected in the community particularly after Europe was embroiled in World War II, and President Franklin Roosevelt described the United States as the "arsenal of democracy."

Involvement of Bakersfield College in World War II

RS: How did the college become part of that arsenal?

Bird: We were asked to conduct courses in technology (auto, machine, welding, aviation) at night to relays of classes. This was part of a federal program in engineering, science, management, defense training with subvention by the federal government.

We ran as many shifts as we could. We might have operated the shops twenty-four hours a day had we not had to use all our time for the machinery to cool before our regular day classes began. The paperwork was frightful in spite of the fact that our State Department of Education had developed a California Plan that provided uniform procedures for all our junior colleges with such programs.

We also had a program for students on campus who wished to enroll. This was instruction in Civilian Pilot Training under contract with the Civil Aeronautics Authority. It included ground school and flight training (elementary and advanced). This proved an asset to our students who became pilots for such airflight companies as Pan Am and United. When we entered the war in 1941, most of our C.P.T. graduates were commissioned officers in the Navy or Army Air Force. I took the ground school course myself just to know what our bright young men were talking about. I think that every one of those who flew missions in the war survived, although not all our Bakersfield students did.

Bakersfield's first Navy ace was one of the C.P.T. graduates, Lt. Cmdr. Jack Gist, who then flew to the South Pole with Richard Byrd, and who, after his retirement, entered law school at U.C. Berkeley in the same year that his daughter entered as a university freshman. He is now a lawyer in Washington D.C. specializing in air law.

The Student-Personnel Program at Bakersfield College

- RS: You certainly have followed the lives of your former students to an unusual degree. Tell me about the way in which your administration set about meeting the needs of students and taking into account the differences among them.
- Bird: Let me mention briefly one of the things done that applies to all students. Since we had to keep precise attendance records for every student for the sake of our average daily attendance (A.D.A.) base for state funds, I wanted to know if there were good attendance days and poor ones. My motive was not really A.D.A. but improvement in the learning process. The results of the rather substantial number of cases over two years showed that Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday had the highest percentage of attendance, with Monday less good, and Friday a little worse.
- RS: How did you deal with that?
- Bird: Well, I arranged an unorthodox schedule of classes using at least two of the best days for every academic class. For example, Class X--Mon., Tues., Thurs.; Class Y--Tues., Wed., Fri.; Class Z--Tues., Thurs., Fri. Freshmen orientation was scheduled for Wednesday. This was the kind of schedule we were still following when I retired. The longtime members of the faculty regarded it as better than the traditional way.
- RS: What a sensible approach to scheduling classes. What else did you consider important in meeting the needs of students?
- Bird: You will have noticed that I use the term "student personnel program." That is because counseling is just one part of the program. The other parts are diagnostic testing, placement, and follow-up studies.

Diagnostic testing helps us learn where the student is educationally when he first registers. The record is also available to the counselor if one of his advisees runs into academic or other difficulties on campus. Placement means job placement after completing his preparation in the college or it might mean helping in his transfer to a university or other four-year college.

Counseling, proper, is the give and take in a person-to-person conference of student and counselor. It usually covers academic, vocational, and personal counseling. As I have said often, the students of junior college age are in a period of self-discovery. It is desirable that they have a counselor with whom they can discuss anything. However, I also thought that part of the primary service of the counselor was to improve the learning process just as it was a primary goal of administration. So I encouraged them to keep in touch with one another and with classroom instructors when indicated.

RS: How did you facilitate teachers and counselors working together?

Bird: The thing that did most to maintain mutual confidence, I thought, was that every counselor's schedule included teaching one or more regular classes. They kept having firsthand experience in classroom successes and problems, and the rest of the faculty knew it.

One of the projects was to bring the counselors together each week with the faculty of a different department of instruction. Thus over a period of a few weeks the counselors had met with all departments of instruction. The discussions focussed on what each hoped for from the other for the sake of the individual student and for the learning goals of the subject. They were very friendly and fertile conferences, and they increased the cooperation between individual teachers and individual counselors.

RS: I'm sure they did. And the other project?

Bird: It was one that involved all the teaching faculty. It was near the end of the Thirties when our enrollment was quite large and our faculty about sixty-five. It will be easier to explain if I use a specific subject and a few specific cases of students. What I had asked for was that all teachers prepare a statement of the occupations to which a major in their subject might lead. With this would be very brief descriptions of the occupations if the title was not sufficient. Once this was done one copy of each statement would be deposited with me, and the teachers were to take half an hour some day to discuss what they had found out with each of their classes, and these faculty reports were duplicated for use by counselors.

Now for the examples of specific cases, for they illustrate one aspect of student self-discovery as well as a helpful guidance source. Miss L., a shy sophomore, came to my office one day to say something like this, "I enrolled in botany just to fulfill the science requirement. Now, after one semester, I find it the most engrossing subject I have ever taken. It will be my major at U.C.L.A., and I hope to become a botanical librarian" (one of the occupational outlets discussed in her botany class). Mr. R., an honor graduate from our college and already accepted at Stanford, might have said, "Hi! Do you remember when you suggested I enroll in Botany IA-IB because it might be refreshing with Dr. Benson? Well, it's the cat's whiskers. So long, business administration; come on, botany." He established Garden Center in Bakersfield after graduation from Stanford. Miss M., who was to be married the week after her university graduation to an already successful young man, stopped in late one afternoon to tell me her happy news. Before she left, she asked me, "I'll soon have a degree in botany. What do you think I should do with it?" Since

Bird: I knew she would be living in a medium-sized town, I suggested she start a garden club and lead a group study in home landscaping and gardening. You see, I knew her and knew she had taste and a sense of social obligation, but before she had taken our botany class, she had planned on teaching.

RS: It sounds as if you did a great deal of counseling yourself. While involving yourself in an exceptionally detailed way with students and staff and the processes of running an outstanding school, you were also a leader in the state-wide California Junior College Association and the Central Section as well. I'd like to turn to that now.

Other Achievements

Bird: However, first let me add some more about our college itself during the Thirties. Our student forensics team won the highest national honors in debate and extempore, and we were honored by Phi Rho Pi. Our drama students in Delta Psi Omega won the highest national award for their production of Treasure Island. The award was accompanied by a \$500.00 check which the club and producer, Ethel Robinson, voted to spend on a new stage set.

In football we were twice the runner-up for the Little Rose Bowl Game, once when our coach was Theo (Spud) Harder, and once when the coach was Wallace (Jack) Frost. My debt to both these men is great indeed, for they coached winning teams year after year with no violation of recruiting rules and with never a request for me to permit a player to become eligible in any unorthodox way. They are more than fine coaches; they are fine men, and I still enjoy their friendship through notes at Christmas.

RS: Are there other things you did during the Thirties that you would like to mention here?

Bird: I helped organize an unusual graduate seminar one summer which held half its meetings at Bakersfield College and half on the Los Angeles campus of the University of California. I knew Dr. Merton Hill, who conducted the graduate seminar called "Education 279. The Junior College." I had twice taken over the conduct of the seminar for him at mid-summer when illness had sent him to the hospital, once at Los Angeles and once at Berkeley. I felt free enough to discuss a proposal with him for such an off-campus seminar. I suggested that enrollment be sought from the administrative or semi-administrative staffs (counselors, for example) from Bakersfield College and from Bakersfield High School.

Bird: During the summer session we were able to study projects related to our own work, either closely or loosely, but with attention to much of the available literature and with our own community as our laboratory. We met all day on alternate Saturdays at Bakersfield College and at U.C.L.A. Those of us who took part believed the project was enlivening and led to clearer thinking about our own inter-relations.

RS: You also were invited by the Rockefeller Foundation to participate in a study. Tell me about that.

Bird: Bakersfield College had received notable recognition. I think it was 1938 or '39. I received a letter from Dr. Havighurst, president of the Rockefeller Foundation's General Education Board, inviting me to meet with the board in Chicago to discuss a grant-in-aid for a study in the field of junior college education. Bakersfield College had already been selected as one of the institutions. This gratifying news came as a complete surprise.

No special instructions were given except that each of the five institutions would be asked to suggest possible topics that would be significant at home and in other junior colleges. So as I packed my clothes, I also packed my mind with at least two tentative topics and a preliminary outline of procedures for each. Both proposals received endorsement but the choice was made for the one dealing with improved academic articulation from the eleventh grade through the junior college fourteenth grade.

It was agreed the study would not be begun until the state-wide study of student personnel work in California junior colleges was completed in 1940. However, I discussed the matter with Principal Hedge with whose high school we would be involved. His enthusiasm ran high. Then came World War II, the immediate postwar period with its heavy weighting of veterans, and the Korean War, all of which deferred beginning the study since a minimum of four consecutive years of enrollment of two different groups would be needed, and this would call for a five-year overall study. At the time of my departure from Bakersfield, we had time only to enjoy the grant for the honor it brought for having been chosen.

RS: Tell me about your being named one of California's ten outstanding women of the year in 1934.

Bird: It came as a happy surprise to me. I think it was a relatively new thing in those days, and it was state-wide. If I am not mistaken, the proposal to recognize women by this method came from the Business and Professional Women's Clubs of California. I think the California Federation of Women's Clubs may also have been involved in the selection of those to be honored. There was no special celebration

Bird: for those selected at that time. I learned first of my selection through an article in the Los Angeles Times listing the names of those chosen. To receive the honor at that time was thought to be enough without fanfare, and I, too, thought this was so.

Leadership in Regional and State-wide Junior College Associations

RS: I'd like to move on now to talk about your leadership in regional and state-wide junior college associations. Will you start by telling about your role in the Central California Association?

Bird: Of course. Because of California's great length, many of its activities operated with northern and southern sections. This was true of the California Junior College Association. By 1930 there were several junior colleges in the San Joaquin Valley. Since I and a few carloads of the Bakersfield faculty had been attending the semi-annual meetings of the Southern Section, we believed them to be more than worth the effort. But the other Valley colleges were too far away to attend the meetings.

So I took the initiative and invited the other chief administrators in the Valley to meet with me at breakfast during one of the days of the annual fall meeting of the State Association in 1930, I think. We discussed the desirability of forming a Central Association. I had taken along copies of the constitution and by-laws of the Southern Association to illustrate the organization and pattern of its meetings. I remember how quickly there was full agreement. Out of the meeting came the decision to form a Central Association and have our first conference in the spring of 1931. I was elected president.

RS: I've been told that a year or so later you served as the Central Association's commissioner of athletics.

Bird: Oh, that brief episode in my life comes up every few years and always produces amusement because I am a woman. However, I knew I was being asked to enforce strict adherence to the eligibility rules. The junior colleges in the area were not large enough to maintain full squads in football, for example. If an outstanding player became ineligible academically, it was a tragedy, and presidents in the Central Association received pleas, petitions, and prayers to permit the deficiency to be cleared by some unorthodox method. Well, we stopped that by the addition of an enforcement clause.

Bird: The Central Association thrived and met a felt need by the faculties to meet together in departmental sections and an expressed desire by student body officers to confer together. It was part of the growing up period in the smaller colleges.

RS: Then from 1934 to 1936 you were president of the State Junior College Association. Tell me about that.

Bird: It was a time of increasing strength and continuing self-knowledge on the part of the junior college movement. The activities of the president were basically those of the president of any association whose aim was "the social good." It was my function to expedite the work of the executive committee and the standing committees of the association and such sub-committees as were functioning at the time. I became responsible for the program of the annual meeting of all the junior colleges and the official representatives of the State Department of Education, the state superintendent, and the head of the Division of Secondary Education.

Throughout the year the president of the Junior College Association was the liaison officer between the association and the State Department of Education and also the liaison agent between the State Association and its branch associations.

RS: Did you have any official relationships with the Western College Association or the American Association of Junior Colleges?

Bird: Nothing official. One or another of our California junior college presidents was usually on the board of the A.A.J.C., and he served as our liaison. Some of us attended the meetings of both associations.

I was invited to speak occasionally at the meetings of the Western Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools as the Western College Association was then known. I think it was 1936 when I made a study at the request of the Western Association of guidance programs in California junior colleges. Perhaps you know that the Western College Association has now become the official accrediting agency for the far West.

RS: What particular things did you do as president that you think might characterize your term?

Bird: One was that I thought all the member colleges should be kept in closer touch with the work of the association's committees than the reports at the annual meeting provided. So I asked that each committee distribute at least one progress report during the year. This became a practice. The standing committees continue still. They dealt with legislation, athletics, and articulation. I think there was a sub-committee on uniform course numbering, but it may have come a year or so later. I served on it.

RS: What else seemed important to you?

Bird: I thought we should bring in a fresh point of view from another state, not necessarily from a junior college.

The Thirties were a time of considerable ferment in colleges all across the country in "general education." Harvard was studying its own program and preparing a notable report. Robert Hutchins was redirecting the program at the University of Chicago. An education based on the "one hundred best books" was under study for St. John's College in Maryland. California, itself, had recently (1932) accepted the valuable Suzallo Report of the Carnegie Commission on Education of Higher than High School Grade. It designated "education for social intelligence" as one of the junior college's basic functions.

The report which seemed to be the one which would prove most useful to us was that dealing with the new General College within the University of Minnesota, because the enrollments in the General College showed a wider spread of college aptitude than that of freshmen entering the regular programs of the University of Minnesota. I decided I would invite its director [Dr. Malcolm S. MacLean] to be our main speaker at our annual meeting of administrators. He also met with each of our branch associations for faculties and administrators.

He proved to be a very stimulating speaker, one of the best. He had a mint of ideas and suggestions for approaches to courses of study. He shared freely those things that worked best in the General College and those that were less successful. His influence reached down into many classrooms from the free give and take at the branch association meetings with the teachers.

One of the long-range outcomes of his visit was that sometime later he became a professor of education at U.C. Los Angeles and remained close to our colleges until his retirement in 1961. He and his wife became lasting friends of mine.

The long-range outcome for the junior colleges was to have stirred them to examining their own programs for the general goals of education with a view to improvement. Thus the colleges were more ready to take part in the state-wide study of general education when our association received a grant from the General Education Board to help with its costs in 1938.

RS: During your term, then, the California junior colleges developed more nation-wide connections.

Bird: After my term as president but before the end of the Thirties I had taken part in meetings of the Association of Higher Education in Chicago and in Washington, D.C. I became more and more aware of the remoteness of California from the large foundations from which grants-in-aid for studies in education came. Without some such aid any substantial study involving all our public junior colleges could scarcely be undertaken. Hence my voice was added to the voices of a few colleagues to invite national leaders in higher education to attend our annual meetings and to see first-hand some of our junior colleges and their programs. This bore fruit, for when our association applied for the grant from the General Education Board (Rockefeller Foundation), these national leaders supported our application.

RS: For what major purposes had the grant been requested?

Bird: To study the three major functions of California public junior colleges: general education, occupational curricula, and student personnel work.

RS: What did the grant provide for in carrying out the study?

Bird: It was enough to pay travelling and living for two representatives from every public junior college in the state to assemble over two-day periods three or four times during 1938-40. The studies would be conducted with voluntary leadership from within the association for the functions just mentioned. I was appointed chairman of the committee on student personnel work by the association president and invited to select the committee members to serve with me.

My proposed outline was accepted with a few revisions when our committee met. We organized it in a form that could be answered for the most part by a check mark for more than two hundred items under six headings descriptive of personnel practices: gathering and analyzing data about the student population; counseling; uses of personnel data in effecting a balance between the curriculum and the discovered characteristics of the students; smooth transfer to senior college or job placement; research studies for evaluation; administration of student personnel program.

A digest of it was published in the California Journal of Secondary Education, October, 1940. Reprints were distributed to all California college libraries, I believe.

In retrospect I sometimes think that if I performed any lasting service to our community colleges, it was by having given such concentrated attention to the importance of the discovered characteristics of our students in determining the kinds and levels of courses and the methods developed for teaching them that would best advance the learning process.

RS: After your presidency was over in 1936, I understand that you continued as a leader in the state-wide association.

Bird: I did have a continuing relationship beyond ordinary membership because Bakersfield became the host college for several successive annual meetings of the State Junior College Association because Bakersfield was located in about the center of the California junior college world, for the junior colleges in the south at that time far outnumbered those to the north. A second reason might be our evident pleasure at having them.

RS: What were your responsibilities besides the physical arrangement?

Bird: To plan the annual dinner and provide the entertainment. We enjoyed this part especially, for students from our music department usually appeared in duets or quartettes or solo.

On one occasion, however, there was a near contretemps. I had invited Earl Robinson, composer of "Ballade for Americans" and a musical legend of Lincoln's funeral train called "The Lonesome Train," to be our guest artist. Hardly had word of this reached Los Angeles before I received a telephone call from one of the junior college presidents (then called directors) who, in all friendliness, said I should withdraw the invitation.

RS: What reason did he give for that suggestion?

Bird: He said Earl Robinson was probably a communist and, if not that, a fellow-traveller. I told him I had heard him in Seattle in a one-man recital of the songs he would perform for us, and I could assure him they would only deepen our loyalties for our own country. He insisted that I would be widely criticized if I presented Mr. Robinson.

RS: What happened?

Bird: Mr. Robinson played and sang for us. There were encores and encores. He was given a sustained standing ovation when at last he finished.

On and Off the Job



Enroute to Chicago to confer with
General Education Board, c. 1940



Grace Bird, President of
Bakersfield College, 1947



L. to R.: Theron McCuen, Margaret
Levinson, Grace Bird, Dorothy Albaugh.
Chaperoning a Formal Dance, c. 1940



Grace Bird, Thanksgiving,
1977. In retirement

VI BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE IN THE FORTIES

Bird: The Thirties had been divided into two parts: one, the national crisis of economic collapse and unemployment; the other, the return to almost full employment as the nation became "an arsenal of democracy" for our friends and ourselves.

The Forties also had two parts: our nation at war with massive efforts in war zones, east and west, and with civilian help all across the land (1940-45); and (1946-50) peace, and veterans home to colleges and jobs and family life. The effects of both of these parts were much the same in all the junior colleges in the state.

The Impact of World War II

RS: Can you describe some of the particular effects of World War II on Bakersfield College?

Bird: I think I can remember a rather dramatic illustration which compares the number of pre-war graduates before the draft age was lowered to eighteen with those afterward. The June, 1941 class of graduates numbered about 200. The selective service system had been activated in fall, 1940 with the draft age set at twenty-one, so most of our men students had not yet been affected. The lowering of the draft age to eighteen, however, made a significant change, for we had almost no new freshmen men entrants until spring, 1946. However, in spring, 1942 our sophomores were deferred until graduation, so the number was still about 200. The only exceptions to the deferment were our very fine young Americans of Japanese descent who were evacuated and sent to relocation centers. Can you guess that the number of graduates in the next three years ranged from thirty to fifty each year?

RS: Was there that much decrease in the total enrollment?

Bird: No, because we had several war programs assigned to us, and these brought students to our campus. Our state income from average daily attendance was fairly substantial that first year.

One of the first of such programs involved very intensive short training periods of six weeks each for airplane construction and maintenance. We were assigned groups of 100 students who came to us for a period of six weeks. They were to be enrolled for training. They came from all over the United States and not from California alone. We were required to provide housing and meals for them with scarcely three days notice. Somehow we managed to be ready when the first group arrived. Theron Taber managed that.

RS: Were there any women among them?

Bird: No Rosy-the-Riveters. They were all young men recruits in the Army, if I remember correctly. It might have been just a federal job training program.

RS: Where was the program conducted? You must have had unusual facilities to have had it assigned to Bakersfield. Who taught it?

Bird: Our school district already maintained very good facilities at the airport for instruction in aviation by the college and by Bakersfield High School. They were more than adequate, and Raymond Cross, chairman of the aviation department, was a well informed and enthusiastic teacher. Well, after the first group of young men completed their training, they were employed by the Consolidated Aircraft Company in San Diego.

RS: How many students did Bakersfield train this way?

Bird: I can't remember exactly, but I think it may have been about 300.

RS: Didn't Bakersfield have some connection with the Army Air Corps at Minter Field?

Bird: Yes, indeed. It began in the summer, 1941; but before we continue that, let me tell of the entire college's response to an appeal to save the cotton crop. In contrast to the days of the Depression, there were now so many jobs in the war industries that there were too few farm workers to harvest the crops. Many of the small farms did not try to market their fruit and vegetable crops, but invited neighbors and townspeople to pick whatever they could use. Hundreds accepted the generous offers.

Bird: The cotton fields were a different matter. The large acreage of long staple cotton was valuable to the nation. Large numbers of pickers were needed. The faculty, students, and administration responded in force. My picking area was along rows with several of the faculty and a number of our sturdy students. We worked furiously to fill our sacks with the soft snow-white balls. At day's end we were told that the number of pounds picked by the Bakersfield College people surpassed that of regular pickers.

It had been a new experience for us, and I believe it set many of us to thinking about the lives of the field workers and about the importance of cotton to our country in crisis.

RS: The spirit of that time, as I remember, was the sense of sharing in a common cause.

Bird: To turn now to our cooperation with Minter Field. An Army Air Corps program had been authorized for opening in the summer, 1941. However, the field was not yet ready for use. There were no barracks, no air strips, no equipment, no classrooms. Colonel Carl W. Pyle, who had been appointed commanding officer, called on District Superintendent Thomas Nelson and me to see what could be done. It was agreed we could lend college classrooms and convert a faculty lounge into an office for Colonel Pyle.

Colonel Pyle then asked if some of our faculty could be pressed into service to teach the ground school courses. He knew the college had been teaching ground school for the Civilian Pilot Training. After talking with our instructors, this also was agreed to. Our instructors all felt that they were making a contribution to our country. Minter Field was ready for use by fall, 1941.

RS: How was the program paid for?

Bird: All expenses were funded by the federal government. We lent the facilities, but salaries of teachers and miscellaneous expenses were repaid to the district according to contract. One outcome of the program was that one of our college instructors in the ground school was commissioned first lieutenant in the Army Air Corps and appointed director of the ground school at Minter Field for the duration of the war.

RS: What was his name?

Bird: Paul Freed. He was a superior teacher in the college and an excellent administrator at Minter Field. At the close of the war he returned to the faculty at Bakersfield College.

- RS: What was the relationship between the community and Minter Field?
- Bird: Rather like that of parents toward grown-up sons who are about to go out on their own--pride and confidence mixed with a hidden fear. The community extended its open-hearted courtesy with a stronger undercurrent of affection than usual to officers, cadets, and enlisted men. There were invitations to community events, to dinners in private homes, to community sponsored dances for which junior college women volunteered as dancing partners, and so on. I feel sure that the experience of our community with Minter Field was repeated all over our nation.
- RS: Did the college provide programs dealing with the historical issues of the war period?
- Bird: Dr. Nelson provided an addition to the budget to bring a few speakers on foreign affairs to be "in residence" at the college for two or three days. The purpose was to strengthen our students' grasp of the issues in Europe. There was no thought then that the war would come to the Pacific. I think this was in 1939-40, but I may not have the exact year. It may even have been earlier.

Alexander Kerensky

- RS: Who were some of the speakers?
- Bird: One was Dr. Alexander Kerensky, the Russian general who became head of the provisional government of Russia in 1917 following the dethronement of the czar. The response to Dr. Kerensky's general talks was warm and appreciative.

I was a bit more interested in hearing the outcome of his personal chats with those who called on him. He thought their questions were mature and that they really wanted answers. They asked what convinces the Russian people to support Lenin and Trotsky. They wanted to know what the techniques of communism are. How can we recognize early symptoms?

Twenty or so years later I met Dr. Kerensky again when he came to the Hoover Library and Institute to work on his book, Russia and History's Turning Point. My niece, Virginia Rothwell, and her husband, Easton Rothwell, who was then director of the Hoover Institute, became a sort of California family for him. Since I was now at the University of California and close to Stanford, I, too, was a member of that family. I, too, became Dr. Kerensky's friend. We all celebrated together most of the traditional American holidays during the next three years. I have given my autographed copy of his book to the Bakersfield College library.

- RS: Tell me about his personal qualities.

Bird: I think I was struck first by his alert and vigorous mind. He had a special kind of courtesy too which I did not think of as old world since there was something about him that always seemed to belong to the future.

He was reserved and formal in manner in large groups, yet humorous and easy in our family affairs. How he loved to propose toasts before and after holiday dinners. His bearing was military, and his speech sometimes reflected the imperiousness of a Russian general before his troops. He seemed far younger than his seventy-odd years. His fervor could light a torch.

Changes at Bakersfield College

RS: Once the U.S. was actually at war, what changes took place at Bakersfield College?

Bird: Many of our college freshmen volunteered and with the lowering of the draft age to eighteen, all were registered with selective service.

We were assigned programs by the armed services, as were colleges across the country. The first were for the Air Corps, Army, and Navy. Our thriving Civilian Pilot Training was now replaced by military pilot training. We had been assigned Primary Flight Training (V-1) by the Navy. Those who could enroll would be enlisted in the Navy and would enter active duty upon completion of their advanced training.

The other program assigned to us immediately was Army Advanced Flight Training. Students who had completed our course in Civilian Pilot Training were eligible for this advanced course if they chose to enter the Army. Many did. Other sophomores who had completed C.P.T. and chosen the Navy were deferred until graduation and then sent to Officer Training School at Pensacola.

While all was going smoothly with our flight programs, we were notified that all such programs would have to be moved further inland from the coast as a precaution against an attack from the Pacific. We made arrangements with the high school authorities at Lone Pine in the mountain-bound Owens Valley to use their classrooms and equipment (to which some additions were made) after the close of the regular school day and into the evening. Some of our experienced teachers in our earlier ground school programs helped as staff members. Thus our services to the Air Corps persisted as long as they were needed. Mr. Taber became our coordinator.

RS: Were there any other major military assignments?

Bird: We were asked to take an academic program called V-12 by the Navy. Accepting it presented no problems for us since the curricula were those academic ones in which we had always done well: engineering, pre-medical, and pre-business administration. Students who enlisted in the Navy in any one of these curricula would have their service duty deferred until after their education had been completed. Most of our college freshmen who were not already in Navy V-1 joined. The program was to start the spring semester, January, 1942.

It seemed to me at this point that we should open the program to high school seniors of the district who had recommending grades for university admission and would also have completed the minimum state requirements for high school graduation by the end of the fall semester, December, 1941. I thought these students would probably be the cream of the academic crop and also likely leaders. This would be a way to complete their education and still guarantee a period of naval duty, peacetime if not wartime.

RS: How did you go about having them enlist?

Bird: Oh, that had to be their own decisions. All I wanted to do was to explain to the students and their parents what the whole program was about and let them think it over. We invited them all to an evening meeting for that purpose. But first, of course, I, myself, discussed it with Dr. Nelson and the high school principals of Bakersfield High School (Leslie Hedge) and East Bakersfield High School (Kenneth Rich). All agreed that it would be wonderful for the young men, for it assured them of their education and of entering the war as officers if the war were still in progress. Both Mr. Hedge and Mr. Rich felt the loss of the young men when the program was begun since among them were their student body presidents, senior class presidents, school newspaper editors, and other leaders. However, all of us believed in what we were doing.

RS: How long was the program maintained at Bakersfield College?

Bird: Only for that spring semester. After that time all the young men from our flight programs were sent to army or navy bases for military instruction. The young men in Navy V-12 were sent to universities maintaining Reserve Officer Training Corps.

RS: Then in the following years you had very few men enrolled. Did you also lose faculty during the war?

Bird: Yes, we did. I think it was eight members. The losses almost balanced one another, for we found ourselves neither understaffed nor overstaffed. The loss of teachers who enlisted or were reserve officers who were called into service at the end of the term.

Bird: You can guess how much it meant to me to release to the Navy Mr. Evert and Mr. Taber on whom I depended so continuously for help and advice. Mr. Taber was appointed director of the navy flight program at the University of Colorado. Both entered active service as full navy lieutenants.

Most of the programs for which Mr. Taber had been coordinator with the government or armed services were no longer operating. Dr. Nelson suggested that any carry-over coordination be done by the district business office which had already been handling the financial aspects. Then, since team sports programs in junior colleges were all but disbanded, we concluded that counselors and the dean of women could manage as advisers to the student body.

Toward the end of the war, Norman Harris, an outstanding teacher in physics (university parallel and technical) returned to the campus and assumed the special duties offered to early discharged or wounded veterans and others. He was of great assistance in everything he did.

RS: I suppose the enrollment at the college was very low when classes resumed in the fall with so few men in that age group available.

Bird: Yes, and we were surprised to find there was a lower number of women, too.

RS: Did you find out why?

Bird: We made no formal inquiry, but we did know that some of the young women filled a number of jobs previously held by men in the war or still in war industries. Others volunteered their services to the Red Cross and the U.S.O. and in hospitals. I was told by an elderly philosopher friend that young women do not flock to a place unless there will be young men there, and this may be a reason, too.

RS: Now that you say it, that seems natural. Did the students try to maintain extra-curricular activities?

Bird: Yes, but in a curtailed way. And for the first time we had women student body presidents. There were three, and they served as effectively as did the best of the men who preceded them and with the added special charm that young women of beauty possess.

Margaret Levinson

RS: This may be an appropriate point to talk about Margaret Levinson, a woman who was an important member of your staff. She stayed on after you left, didn't she?

Bird: Yes, indeed. I know of no one I should enjoy saying nice things about as much as Peg Levinson. She came to us early in the Thirties. A Mills College teacher I knew said after we had hired her, "She will be an answer to your prayers." Well, I never had to pray; Peg would already be standing there.

Her first years were as a teacher of English. Excellent! Then, adviser to the student newspaper, The Rip, and chairman of the English Department. Next, dean of women; dean of students; dean of instruction.

RS: What are her special qualities?

Bird: Her leadership was turned to by almost every member of the faculty. Her judgment is close to infallible. She thinks with her heart as well as her mind. The community believed in her as, of course, the students did. Her associates in other junior colleges admired her and sought her opinion. She became one of the best and most gracious speakers one could hear. When her graduating class from Mills College celebrated its fiftieth anniversary and saluted President Lynn White, it was Peg who was chosen to be their speaker.

RS: That's a high honor.

Bird: And with all this, she possesses a delicious sense of humor which is ever present. She maintained an endearing loyalty to persons and beliefs. Even without words she conveyed the spirit and ideals of our college.

The Sixth War Loan Drive

RS: I understand that you played a leading role in the effort to raise money for war bonds. Would you tell about that?

Bird: I was asked to be general chairman of the Sixth War Loan Drive in 1944. They were called loans because the bonds were redeemable by the purchaser at their maturity date at the end of the war. They were a form of savings deposit. The national budget for the Sixth Loan was four billion dollars.

Bird: I do not remember the amount we were to raise in Kern County, but I remember well that we raised more than our assignment. Each loan drive had some special feature, and the Sixth's was "Book-and-Author."

RS: Who were the authors who participated in the Bakersfield drive?

Bird: They were sent to us from the central committee of California's war loan drives. They were Vicki Baum, Irving Stone, Erskine Caldwell, Kathleen Winsor, Colonel Hussey (the first American ace in the Pacific theater), and Bakersfield College's own Darrell Berrigan, a United Press correspondent with General Stillwell.

RS: What did you do to promote the purchase of bonds?

Bird: The activities we planned were much like what was being done all over the country: rallies, radio appeals, and canvassing of organizations and households. We arranged for two rallies in Bakersfield and for canvassing throughout the country.

RS: Tell me about the rallies.

Bird: We arranged an afternoon rally in Griffith Stadium on the Bakersfield High School campus for high school and college students, faculties, and parents who wished to come. The authors were seated on a platform, and each made a brief talk and appeal.

The students had been collecting written pledges to purchase bonds from neighborhood businesses, parents, and neighbors to file with their several team captains for announcement at the rally. Announcements were made after each author spoke. Each class was hoping to surpass the others. There was a roar when Miss Baum announced that she wished to give the freshman class credit for her purchases of war bonds. The evening rally was held in East Bakersfield High School auditorium, which was overflowing. It was here we were soon over-subscribed.

I learned a great deal more from this experience than I already knew about how things work, why they work smoothly, and who are those who make them work in response to any national appeal.

RS: What did you learn?

Bird: Well, it is not all new, but the degree of it may be. So, here it is. A city or a region or a whole state depends upon a relatively very small group of citizens to organize, direct,

Bird: and bring to a successful conclusion the drive for funds for national or state emergencies or for major charitable needs from earthquake, flood, cyclone, and the like. By the way, please don't think for a minute I have ever been one of these small groups of citizens.

To continue, leaders serve without any special remuneration. Most other fund raisers charge a fee. These men were among the top ranking officers in the local division of the organizations which employed them. In Kern County this usually meant Standard Oil (or Shell, or Richfield, or Associated), Bank of America (or Security-First National), Kern County Land Company, J.C. Penney, Di Giorgio Corporation, Ford Agency (or Chrysler, or General Motors). It is these organizations which grant time to their leaders to become our leaders in time of need.

Thus James J. Wilt, of such an organization, was the true manager of our Sixth War Loan Drive. He gave all his time to it, travelled to every community in the county to obtain agreements on procedures and reports of outcomes. His own energy was an inspiration to all who worked with him. His time was actually a gift to the people from his employer. I doubt that the general public is aware of how much these organizations and their officers contribute to the success of such fund raising.

RS: Do you remember if the Sixth Drive was the last?

Bird: I think there was one more. However, General MacArthur returned to the Philippines in the Pacific, and across the Atlantic, Paris and Athens were liberated. Although none of us knew atomic power would come into use, we now believed the war could not last much longer.

Letters to Former Students in the Armed Services

RS: Before we leave this period in our interviews, I want to ask you about your famous letters to former students who were in the armed services during the war.

Bird: I felt quite deeply that I wanted to do something personal that would be more than "help the war effort." I wanted to do something that our own men in uniform would probably enjoy. I concluded that one thing I felt sure they would want to know was what their friends or even just former fellow students who were now in the service were doing--where they were, promotions they may have received, other Kern County men they may have met on duty. You see, my purpose was to keep them in touch with one another--even to feeling close to one another.

RS: How sensitive of you, and how ambitious. How did you proceed?

Bird: First of all, I consulted Superintendent Nelson to see if having the letters stenciled and mimeographed and then franked could come from the district budget. His answer was enthusiastically affirmative.

My second step was to communicate with army and navy intelligence officers in Los Angeles and San Francisco to learn what I could and could not report in the letters without endangering our military plans or any individual's safety. Both services had a representative stop by to see me.

The instructions were simple and few. I could never report a specific place of service such as Guadalcanal, but I could state the zone or theater of war: China-Burma theater, European theater, Pacific theater, or any state in the U.S.A. I could never report a serial number, but I could report military rank. I could relay any news I might receive from any one of them to all the rest of them, provided I heeded the restrictions given me.

RS: To how many did each edition of the letter go?

Bird: In the beginning to about 350--the men and a few women who were graduate nurses and who had gone from our more recent classes. Hardly, however, had the letter reached them than I began to receive notes from other former students asking to be on the mailing list. My first "Letter to Men in Service" ran to about three-and-a-half legal-sized single-spaced typed pages.

RS: How did you manage the mailing?

Bird: By using our regular clerical staff and by women student volunteers. New names were being added continually to our mailing list. By the time it reached 700, the letter was probably seven pages long. The envelopes had grown fatter and rounder until the counter in the college's central office appeared to be covered by miniature sandbags protecting the staff behind them.

RS: How often did you write one of these letters?

Bird: I tried to prepare one once a month during the academic year. None in the summer.

RS: What an enormous task on top of your regular duties.

Bird: Well, my regular duties had been eased by the lower enrollment, of course, but I do admit to going without much sleep on the few days before issuance of a letter and to having few recesses on

Bird: weekends. However, a theory I had developed long ago and proven was now reaffirmed: that the kind of tired one gets from performing a loving act is soon repaired since that very act is life-giving.

Moreover, I have been told that my purpose in helping to hold the former students close together influenced the decision to establish a Bakersfield College Alumni Association.

Bakersfield College Alumni Association

RS: When was the association formed?

Bird: The sign-up took place at the annual Christmas dance of the association. I think it was 1945. And what a Christmas present that has been for the college ever since! As it turned out, it was also a present for me.

RS: How was that?

Bird: The Alumni Association was formally established in May, 1946. A year later its members celebrated with a first anniversary dinner. I was their guest of honor, for I, too, was celebrating my thirtieth year of service in the district to which I had come as a high school teacher in fall, 1917. There were representatives present from every junior college class from 1920 through 1947. The gracious president of the Alumni Association, John Boydston, presented me with a gift of several albums of music ranging from classical to folk music.

Mr. Spindt came from Berkeley to join the speakers in saluting the two anniversaries and in praising the alumni for the quality of its association. The faculty representative who spoke was Leonard McKaig, a greatly admired and longtime favorite of mine. District Superintendent McCuen and four of the district's high school principals were there. Messages came from the college faculty, other former students, and from a few university administrators such as Dr. Sproul.

RS: That must have been a most gratifying experience.

Bird: That has been a truly wonderful Alumni Association which has been busy awarding scholarships and sponsoring campus-community relations for years now.

Outcomes of Wartime Programs

RS: I wonder, now, if you would discuss the changes in the college that resulted from your wartime programs.

Bird: One of the outcomes of our flight training programs at Lone Pine was a request for the college to continue a program of post-high school education for adults of that area.

A somewhat smiliar request came from Dr. Arthur H. Warner, a member of our Board of Trustees, who was director of the navy (missile) base at Inyo-Kern. His earliest desire had been for us to offer courses in such subjects as calculus to upgrade the technical personnel. Later we were asked to broaden the offerings for other adults and for the younger high school graduates. That sort of service persists still.

RS: When the war began to wind down in 1944 with the Allies invasion of France and MacArthur's return to the Philippines, I assume you began to prepare for the post-war period.

Bird: Yes. I thought we should make an occupational survey of our area to help determine the overall occupational needs and probable placement opportunities in our county to assist our returning veterans--those who would resume their education and those who would enter employment.

RS: Tell me about the occupational survey.

Bird: I placed the entire project in the hands of Norman Harris, whom I have already called a thoroughbred, and, true to form, he was already beginning his outline of procedures within the hour.

For the most part the findings indicated that what we were already doing was in the right direction. But new areas of service had opened up during the four years, which needed or would soon need new curricula such as vocational nursing, electronics, food processing, chemical products, television repair and also television performance, and others just beginning to show on the lip of the horizon.

There was one negative finding: that there was little opportunity for placement locally in aviation. Since the findings I am reporting apply to a time thirty years ago, I believe the negative finding in aviation would no longer be true for the common use of private planes surely calls for more, not fewer, aviation mechanics.

Bird: Mr. Harris remained with us through 1949-1950 before being appointed professor of junior college education at the University of Michigan.

The Impact of Returning Veterans

RS: With the war ending in 1945, would you talk about the impact on the college of returning veterans? How soon did they start coming back?

Bird: A few that fall; a great many, spring, 1946. Most of the faculty who had been in military service returned also that spring. However, the enrollment in the college was of such proportions that we had to employ ten additional teachers on very short notice. Once again I felt fortunate that we had such a close association with Bakersfield High School and Principal Hedge, for his staff had some teacher-scholars who wanted to join the college staff and who were released to do so.

Dean Theron Taber returned and became associate district superintendent. Dr. Edward Simonsen, a young educator of great promise, became our dean of men. We also had the good fortune to have Mr. Burns Finlinson, who was then the chief administrator of the junior college at St. George, Utah, accept an appointment to become dean of records at Bakersfield College. There was scarcely a pause in our forward movement.

RS: What of the returning veterans? Who were they? Where did they come from?

Bird: Most of them belonged to families in our district. Many had attended Bakersfield College before the war. Some had been in our military programs that first year after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Others came from other states. A few were not high school graduates. The G.I. Bill contributed to the support of all while they pursued a college program of studies.

RS: What did you do with those who were not high school graduates?

Bird: First, we tried to find out how far advanced they were in the basic learning skills in English and mathematics, for we had maintained for several years an effective program for students whose skills were at the level of the state average for high school juniors. These fitted into the program we already had. If the special testing we used showed skills below this level, we had to devise ways to serve that veteran individually.

RS: Another example of the Bakersfield reputation for helping the individual. How else did you adapt the curriculum to the needs of the veterans?

Bird: A higher percentage than usual were in transfer curricula leading to senior colleges and universities. There was a backlog of students in pre-engineering and physical science majors. Our courses in physics, chemistry, and calculus were jammed. We had had to bring in additional faculty in these areas. Business courses boomed for business administration and also for locally centered businesses. These also called for new teachers as did our technology curricula, although to a lesser degree in that first term. This was going on all over the state in universities as well as junior colleges. The effect was almost monumental.

The seriousness of purpose of the veteran, his self-discipline, and perhaps most of all, his deep desire to establish himself quickly in a profession and to establish a home and family brought unusually high scholarship achievement wherever they were enrolled. Faculties everywhere spoke of their pleasure at having these "seasoned" men in their classes. Moreover, our follow-up studies of their scholarship records after transfer gave us the most notable reports we had ever had.

The faculty members who had now returned to classes from service in the war gave the impression of never having left those classes at all. My right hand in academic affairs, Mr. Ewert, was back and ready to help with new teachers and every other way he could. Although Mr. Taber had become associate superintendent, he was near at hand in the district office. So, we felt our strength had not been lessened, but that it might prove to have been increased by our election of Dr. Simonsen and Mr. Finlinson. How much it actually had been strengthened is proven by the fact that after my retirement and Mr. Taber's brief substituting for me, both of these men served terms as presidents of Bakersfield College; and Dr. Simonsen has become chancellor of the new Kern Community College District with campuses now at Bakersfield, Porterville, Kernville, and China Lake in Inyo-Kern.

RS: What about student body activities after the veterans returned to the college?

Bird: Of course, they were really normal in numbers and varieties of activities through spring, 1942. The college was outstanding in debate under our very capable teacher of speech, Leonard McKaig, who was also a strong counselor; we won state and national honors. Our Chapter of Phi Rho Pi (debate) was the largest it had ever been. In fact, all the clubs in special fields were winning notice by the quality of their service.

Bird: Two new honor clubs were established that recognized service to the student body: Renegade Knights (men) and Lance and Shield (women). Lance and Shield was particularly helpful in student affairs and community relations during the actual years of the war. After the war it was astonishing to see the ease with which new groups who did not inherit the customary continuity took over.

There was a sound of music in the air--not fanfare of trumpets, but excellently blended voices in Ronald Clark's a capella choir and Negro quartette bringing ovations from the community. And Cal Mueller's string ensemble and his brass quintet introducing classical sounds, and, of course, Harold Burt's orchestra. Talented Margo Robesky taught classes in modern dance, and Albert Dennis had a full load of photography students. Painting, ceramics, and art metal flourished, as did drama.

It was as if we had rediscovered ourselves in the humanities while still maintaining our other functions.

Delta Kappa Gamma

RS: It sounds as if a post-war renaissance were taking place at Bakersfield College. What else was happening then?

Bird: The National Honor Society for Women in Education established a chapter in Bakersfield in the Forties, I think. Its name was Delta Kappa Gamma. I was elected to membership. Not all members were in schools and colleges. Our membership included Eleanor Wilson, our county librarian, and two distinguished medical doctors, Dr. Lucille May and Dr. Sophie Goldman Rudnick. It was altogether a highly respected group of women in the community.

The Washington State School Survey

RS: Would you like to tell about your work as a consultant on the Washington State School Survey in the spring of 1945?

Bird: Yes, I kept my commitment and set out for Olympia in March, 1945. Serving as a consultant on a major survey is an experience not soon to be forgotten because of the pressure of time under which one must work, but also because of the warm companionship with one's associates.

Bird: The co-directors of the survey were Dr. George D. Strayer of New York and Dr. W.L. Connor of Pennsylvania. There were many consultants, but schedules called for only three or four to be in residence at the same time.

My associates were Professor Eugene Lawler of Chicago for finance, Dr. Jesse F. Williams of Columbia for health and physical education, our own Julian McPhee of California Polytechnic for technical education, and, of course, Dr. Strayer and Dr. Connor. Our headquarters were in the state capitol, high on its hill in Olympia, while the legislature was not in session.

Our first laugh came when Drs. Strayer and Connor installed me in my office. It was a very large room with six telephones. The desk and chair must have been used in Brobdingnag, for when I sat down I could not reach the desk top to write without sitting on a very fat telephone book, and then my feet didn't touch the floor. But my window looked out on the magnificent Olympic Mountains, and I wouldn't have changed rooms for anything. Besides there were two more telephone books for footrests if needed. So, I patted the one on the chair to indicate satisfaction, and we all laughed again.

RS: Would you tell about your purposes and how you proceeded to conduct the survey?

Bird: Well, you visit the institutions about which you will be writing, and you obtain all sorts of information about them and the communities they serve. Dr. Strayer had made arrangements to have the director of junior college education in the State Department of Education, Dr. William Black, take me to each of the nine junior colleges then operating. We began these trips in two or three days after I had outlined the topics I hoped to cover.

If you know that Washington is one of our most beautiful states, you will know that driving through its open country and in its mountains produces a euphoria one does not want to shake off.

After each trip I began to organize my findings and assemble any numerical data so that when all colleges had been visited, I could collate and analyze. Everyone in the visits was courteous and friendly but rather passive. I missed the eagerness with which our people in California greeted every opportunity to benefit from projects.

The administrations at Everett and Bremerton were exceptions. The president at Everett was a whirlwind spinning his college forward. Bremerton knew its goals and had confidence it could reach them.

Bird: I should like to tell a few things about Dr. Connor, for he is one of the truly rare persons I have known. He had made himself a Gaelic scholar. He had translated some of St. Patrick's poems and those of other early Celtic poets. One day when I arrived at the capitol, I found on my desk a copy of his translation of a sixth century B.C. poem of four lines by Fionn File. It was a gift from him. And another day he gave me a musical setting he had composed for James Stephen's translation of "O'Raftery's Triumph" by the famous Irish poet, Blind Raftery. Yes, Dr. Connor was also a musician and composer.

We sometimes walked up the hill to the capitol together. As we walked across the grounds to the steps to the building, he motioned us off the path to the lawn beneath a row of young trees in bloom whose blossoms hung with dew and fragrance. We walked under the row with heads held back letting the fragrance and the light wetness freshen our faces. He turned toward me and said, "Better than a morning prayer."

He loved birds and replenished regularly the bird seed on his window ledge. One bird made friends with him and frequently came through the window when it was open to sit on a cabinet or chair back while he worked. It saddens me to say that this gifted and loving person died of a heart attack while I was en route home. I did not learn of it until a letter came from Dr. Strayer.

RS: He sounds indeed like a rare man whose memory continues to give you pleasure. Back to Bakersfield, how did the college fare without you?

On Teacher Self-Evaluation

Bird: The staff fared so well that I began to feel as if I would no longer be needed. I had distributed earlier fresh copies of our agreed upon purposes as a sort of refresher course. Accompanying them was a note saying I might ask the faculty to rate themselves on how well they thought they were contributing to the general goals by their teaching. I developed a brief rating sheet which I think I submitted later that spring or possibly the next year.

RS: What an atmosphere of trust you must have established to induce your faculty to engage in honest self-evaluation. Self-protective instincts run strong in such situations.

Bird: I do not believe that any members of the faculty at Bakersfield while I was there ever tried to give what they thought I would consider a preferred answer. They were all scrupulously fair and honest. A few who gave themselves low ratings did so, I think, because they had not been conscious of the fact that good English is a major goal of education in the United States. And oh, how it ought to be!

I have already said in an earlier interview that our native language is the main thing that holds us together as a nation. If we can make it correct for everybody, it will heighten our pride in our nation. If we can make it beautiful, it will hold us together through our pride and regard for one another.

I was more than a little dismayed at our last local election to find the ballot presented in three languages: English, Spanish, and Chinese. Do we hold citizenship in our country so casually that newcomers to our shores and across our borders are granted a vote that may influence our destiny before they can read or write our common language? The privilege to learn it is already available throughout our free public school system. I would allow our immigration laws to admit newcomers, but I would hold back the right to vote until the language of that government is understood and used. As you see, I am concerned that we are defeating our own great goal by not requiring proper preparation for the right to citizenship.

Evolution of Administration and Administrative Staff

RS: I share your concern. Since we have been talking about how the staff and faculty fared during your absence, perhaps you would talk now about the evolution of the administrative staff that carried on so ably for you.

Bird: For the first ten years of my tenure I was the only person in administration of the college except Dr. Spindt, our district superintendent. He was as much like a co-president as it is possible to be. I was simultaneously his vice-principal of Bakersfield High School. We worked together closely in matters concerning the faculty, particularly with those members who taught part-time for both of us. I was his director of assemblies. Otherwise I was dean of everything in the junior college.

After five years, however, the college had grown in students and in full-time staff. Student activities had multiplied. Many of my high school duties had been assigned to others; for

Bird: my time and energies belonged increasingly to the college. It seemed essential to devise a plan of enlisting the faculty in the registration of students at fall and spring admission. Some of the teachers with longer experience in the college were asked to serve as academic advisers; others, to assist the students in arranging the program of studies approved by the faculty advisers into a weekly class schedule. Of course, many students could take both these steps by themselves, but we required in all cases that the program have an adviser's signature and that of the enrollment assistant. This plan worked well and rather smoothly until late in the Thirties. You can see how professional counseling is beginning to become a part of administration. So too were professional staff needs for student affairs and educational accounting.

RS: What brought about the special need in student affairs?

Bird: The sports program. Our football coach, Theo Harder, produced perennially winning teams, and the students and community began to pack the stadium and student body coffers. I invited Theron Taber, our very strong teacher of calculus, to be our commissioner of athletics and adviser to the student executive committee in matters of the budget. He thus became an administrative assistant. This had gone back to the early Thirties.

RS: How did openings for the rest of the administrative staff develop?

Bird: Such staff as the college had and such staff as Principal Lester Hedge of the high school had were all housed in the district office with Dr. Spindt. The junior college building, to which our staff was to move, was not yet complete. I think it was 1936--maybe 1935--before we were in our own headquarters. Such gratification!

And now let me move through the rest of our administrative evolution to the situation in my last years. I should like to do so by first listing by title the areas in which direction and/or coordination were needed.

At the responsible top is the chief administrator, or the president. If there is only one junior college in the district, he will need a vice-president for business affairs. If, as I was, he is the chief campus officer in a district with a district superintendent or a chancellor, he will himself have the added duty of coordination with such offices. Responsible to the president will be officers directing the activities of their field toward the goals of the institution: dean of instruction (since I believed the learning process was at the center of our aims I made this function mine and regarded Mr. Ewert my academic assistant); dean of records--his responsibility would embrace all

Bird: educational accounting (attendance records, academic records, eligibility records, admissions, registration, and research based on any of these when indicated or needed; Burns Finlinson held this position and improved it with innovations and sensitive understanding.

Dean of student personnel--this includes group and individual testing, director of guidance and coordinator of counseling and placement. This was Dr. Orral Luke when I left, a careful technician and optimistic director. There were eight counselors, all of whom taught part-time to remain close to the faculty-student point of view. One was responsible for veterans.

There were the indispensable deans of women, Margaret Levinson and Esther Bassett Sargent, and the indispensable dean of men, Edward Simonsen, who did more than can be measured as they held student government and affairs on a steady keel while piloting with a light hand. There was a lively director of the Evening Division, Parley Kilburn, and, in the spring, 1950, a director of the China Lake Evening Division in Inyo-Kern.

State-wide Study of General Education in the Junior College

RS: I want to go back now to that state-wide Study of General Education in the Junior College. The war had interrupted its completion. In some of our off-the-tape discussions you have spoken of a view you had about general education that is not very often presented in discussions.

Bird: I was not a member of the state-wide committee of junior college administrators who directed the study, but I was invited to make the keynote address that launched the study. This was at a quite large meeting of administrators and teachers held at Ventura College.

At U.C. Los Angeles, probably in summer, 1940, I took part in a conference sponsored jointly by the State Association's committee and B. Lamar Johnson, then professor of junior college education on that campus. The conference had a plenary session followed by section meetings. I was invited to be one of the section leaders.

My section was made up primarily of teachers and department chairmen for academic transfer courses and technical institute courses. It was a good group. However, we were all aware that our country could not remain out of the war in Europe much longer. When it became a two-ocean war in 1941, further developments in

Bird: the general education study in local areas moved slowly until 1947 or a little earlier. Now, if I may, I should like to state a criticism I had of the study as it was being pursued.

RS: Indeed, yes.

Modes of Thought

Bird: I think the study placed proper emphasis on the knowledge to be acquired, but far too little on the important modes of thought to be learned and practiced and mastered. These are the bases for clear and analytical thinking throughout one's life. However, it is useless to know a technique for thinking unless there is something to think about.

RS: Tell me more about what you mean by modes of thought.

Bird: In the college classroom the student receives a great deal of information, much of it new to him. From his previous education he sorts it out and stores it in his mind's library. But he is also learning how that information came into being and why it has persisted.

As an example, he learns what the Bill of Rights says. But he also learns what the assumptions were that brought about each amendment and why each was adopted. Recently we have been debating a proposed Equal Rights Amendment. Since so many states have rejected it, the thoughtful person must ask himself why. Surely not because of sex bias; so he wonders what implications (economic, political, or social) lay in its wording and its goal.

So, my view of the learning process includes considerable emphasis on the modes of thought, the processes with which we think about the knowledge we are absorbing, the ways we can evaluate the conclusions we hope will prove valid.

RS: Can you identify the processes or modes by name?

Bird: Yes, and since they are themselves disciplines we could call them by that name as well. The first and simplest is the discipline of precision: learning to think precisely when precision is the essence. For example, two plus two equals four. $E=MC^2$. Although these examples are from mathematics and science, most other subjects in the curriculum have some dimension of precision. Developing the memory plays a large beginning role. Vocabulary, spelling, language structure,

Bird: inflection in foreign language give continuous experience in thinking with precision. In short, I think the insistence on the correct spelling, pronunciation, and meaning of the professional language of every subject from agriculture to zymurgy would provide the repeated experience necessary to develop a skill and habit of precision.

A second mode of thought is hypothesis. It is different from assumption in that an assumption usually takes for granted what it assumes. Hypothesis is only a tentative explanation. It is inferred from the evidence already available, but this is not enough unless we can find additional evidence to support it. Hypothetical thinking enters our group life daily and our private lives almost as often as we seek further evidence that what we hypothesize will lead to the proper conclusion.

It is akin to the scientific method, but it does not necessarily involve controlled experiments as science does. It uses informed reasoning for conclusions in social matters.

The third mode, appreciation, is more difficult to describe because it results in a response of one's spirit. It, too, can grow with practice. The practice must come with exposure to things or experiences to which one's spirit or higher emotions respond. Let me try to explain by using the words of three or four people who have evoked such responses over the years.

Goethe said, "We do not learn to understand anything unless we love it." Bertrand Russell referred to it as, "a mind free from the restless forces that control our outward life." And one more that comes from perhaps the greatest of all creative minds, Leonardo da Vinci, "The love of anything is the offspring of knowledge; the love being more fervent as the knowledge is more certain."

The last mode is the process of "putting it all together." It is not summary, but an "alliance" of all modes which will give us access to our knowledge, old and new, and our experiences, old and new, in a rounder way. As in chemistry, it is a process of synthesizing the components to make a whole.

In learning, it is a combining of separate elements of thought and emotion by which we reach more valid judgments and may make better choices for action and belief. I think success in "general education" and education in general should insure substantial experience in these modes of thinking.

RS: On the subject of effective education, what do you think of the relationship between size of a college and the quality of education it provides?

Bird: I think size is not a determining factor in the quality of education unless it is combined with a poverty budget. The ratio of certificated staff to full-time student enrollment is a more reliable datum to predict a probable level of quality. And, of course, the quality of the teaching staff and counselors and the educational philosophy of the administration contribute much.

Views on Being a Woman Administrator

RS: Do you have views on the differences between men and women in their roles as administrative leaders in junior colleges?

Bird: To make my answer clear I must explain an important administrative difference among California junior colleges. If the district maintaining a junior college also maintains other units of the secondary school system, the junior college president is the chief campus officer of the college, and the district superintendent is the chief district officer responsible directly to the Board of Trustees. It is this sort of organization of which Bakersfield College was a part during my tenure as president and for a few years after. For many years this was the commonest type of organization of our public junior colleges.

If the junior college is in its own separate junior college district, the district superintendent may himself be the president or he may appoint a separate person to be president. This became the commonest type of organization state-wide and remains so today. However, several large districts now maintain more than one junior college campus each of whom has its own campus president, and the title of the district's superintendent is now chancellor. And now I am ready to reply to your question.

I think a woman can be as able a chief administrator as a man when the presidency of the junior college is for a single institution even though it may have decentralized adult centers staffed by its own faculty. Her obligations will still be primarily with teachers, students, the curriculum, and evaluation of the institution in terms of its purposes.

As a generalization, I think a man is likely to be more able than a woman to serve as a district superintendent or chancellor. His duties in connection with physical plants, building programs, land purchases, financial support call for objective approaches and defensible methods and decisions. Again as a generalization, a man looks at the broad environment of education; the woman looks at the individual and society. Both must be willing to be the court of last resort if the ideals of their institution are threatened.

RS: Do you think women are discriminated against in appointments to administrative posts?

Bird: Yes, I do, and in such a negative way. I think far too few women are being groomed to become junior college presidents or vice-presidents. I think far too few women teachers think about ways to improve administrative practice as it pertains to students or to the faculty. I think not enough women teachers devise imaginative ways of measuring the progress of individual students by increments. They don't think administratively. Margaret Levinson could and did.

RS: Do you think there is discrimination against women in matters of salary?

Bird: Yes, I have known of several instances particularly in occupations other than education. I think it is possible I was discriminated against in salary. I do not mean this as positively as it sounds. After all, there was a district superintendent in the top post of the huge district with financial responsibility for the creation and maintenance of the school units in his district including the college.

My salary and those of the several high school principals may have been proper in relation to his salary, whatever it was. I don't doubt this. Yet the chairman of the Board of Trustees asked me if I would reconsider my intention to leave my position in Bakersfield if I were to receive a \$3,000 increase in my salary. This caused me to wonder. Would the man who would replace me receive that much more for the same responsibilities I had carried? I thought it more than likely. However, I had always received generous responses to the requests I had made for special help I thought the college needed.

RS: While we are still on the subject of women, I'd like to talk a little more about the women's movement of today. I know you are not in sympathy with some aspects of it.

Bird: I do have a few strong objections to certain practices of the N.O.W. leaders. One is the damage being done to our language with all this "chairperson" kind of thing. Is mankind to become personkind? Why substitute a neuter gender for honest man and woman? My motto is, "Vive la difference," along with the laws of nature.

RS: Is the change in language your chief point of opposition?

Bird: One point, but not the only one. I think the insistence on opening all doors equally to both sexes is a violation of human rights: first, the right to privacy without coercion; second,

Bird: the right to choose our friends and our private social club so long as no one is harmed by our choice.

Using "Ms." to replace "Mrs." and "Miss" may be harmless unless those who wish to be known as "Mrs." or "Miss" have "Ms." forced upon them. I think I have the right to retain the traditional title. I think you will be amused as I was when a young woman of my acquaintance who used to be very pro-"Ms." had a baby a few months ago. She suddenly began using "Mrs." I asked her why. Her reply was that she thought "Mrs." was really the right title, and besides, she added, she wanted people to know her child was born in wedlock. It was the first time I had heard that argument.

Views on Teachers' Unions

RS: I believe there was no teachers' union at Bakersfield College during your presidency, isn't that so?

Bird: There was no union with affiliation with one of our national trade unions. Teachers were represented by the California Teachers' Association in matters before the legislature or in local disputes when warranted.

RS: Just the same, I believe you have some opinions about teachers' unions.

Bird: I do, but they are rooted in principles I believe in and not in firsthand experience. I do know a little something about the experiences of others in a few junior colleges in the north and south. In terms of those principles and the reported experience of those junior colleges, I am opposed to teachers forming unions affiliated with a national trade union since this inevitably leads to the right to strike.

I believe that when a person enters the teaching profession, he is making a promise, though unspoken, to himself and to our nation to keep the education process functioning. We know a democracy must have an educated electorate to survive. A strike by teachers deprives children and youth of their right to learn in a publicly supported classroom that is greater than the teacher's right to desert that classroom on strike.

Of course, if violence has taken over the classroom, the college administration must provide a tentative solution and then a permanent one which will keep the class open in both cases. The teacher has recourse to the California Teachers' Association to go to court if necessary.

RS: What would you provide in place of unionizing?

Bird: The conference followed by cooperative planning between faculty and administration. This is the method by which salary schedules were developed in most California districts before the Fifties, and it worked without friction or outside affiliation.

You see, I think the principle of "the right to strike" produces an atmosphere of uncertainty, even threat, throughout the campus. It tends to put those who teach against those who administer. However slight it be, it weakens the spirit of unity of teacher, student, administrator, and community which should be providing a wholesome attitude for learning. This should be first in everybody's heart.

An Appreciation of the Teaching Staff

Bird: As the time approached to leave the valley for the Bay, I kept thinking of the truly remarkable people with whom I was associated who were teachers in Bakersfield College. The only way I could properly acknowledge how much they did to make the college the valuable and respected institution it is would be to write a canticle of praise addressed to all of them by name. However, that might require another book.

I shall hope that anyone who reads this account of an early day junior college will accept these persons as symbols of many others from the faculties that have served in Bakersfield College. The influence of these men and women will continue to persist a long time because the values they gave to the community and to their students were permanent values. Their faith in their students and their belief in their subject never diminished. Here are some of them to stand as representatives of them all: R.E. (Bob) Vivian, who inspired more students per square foot of laboratory space to continue with advanced study in chemistry than anyone before or since; Mirian Gatley Escher, the perfect ladder to better written English; Robert Young, who was Mr. Economics by day and Mr. Forum by evening; George Sagen, physicist, and Paul Baldwin, zoologist, about whom our transfers to universities often wrote back to us that they had met no professor in the university they now attended who surpassed either of these men as teachers; Lyman Benson, botanist, of whom a student said, "You know you are with a scholar when you enroll in his class"; Thomas Merson, wearing a coat of many colors as teacher, administrator, counselor, consultant, and one year on loan to the U.S. Office of Education; Paul Van der Eike in geology and Ysabel Forker in Spanish, who were already on the college faculty when

Bird:

I joined it and who were still there as very strong teachers when I left; Harland Boyd, who not only taught history but who produced from his own research two interesting volumes which record parts of Kern County's history; the dedicated staff of men in technology who, while teaching their college students, became sort of sponsors to them by helping to place them in employment at the highest level their acquired skills warranted--men such as Harry Drennan, auto trades; Dean Smith, machine technology; Noble Stutzman, welding; Ray Cross, aviation; and Walter Stiern, cabinet making; the skillful and zealous teachers in the business field who kept the Bakersfield business community supplied with well trained and well adjusted persons for their staffs. Let a few represent the many: Paul Asperger and Wylie Jones in accounting, with Wylie also in business economics and small business enterprise, Richard Tigner in merchandizing, and a bouquet of women teaching secretarial science: Clara Holmes, Marion Carson, Lucile Parmenter--all with the indispensable help of Henrietta Showalter and Dorothy Albaugh teaching business English and psychology; and although named last, but never the least, the staffs in the humanities: an artist in her own right as well as an inspiring teacher, Ruth Heil Emerson, and Clayton Rippey, whose own work is displayed in San Francisco, while at Bakersfield College he arranges exhibits of the work of his students and fellow faculty members. In music, Harold Burt, who took over the music department of the high school and junior college my first year as the college dean, 1921, and stayed on to found the Community Orchestra and to become the greatest musical influence among Bakersfield's youth; teacher and composer, Calvin Mueller; Ronald Clark, sensitive leader of voice ensembles ranging from duets to full choirs. In drama, Ethel Robinson, whose skillful combination of several arts in her play productions brought pleasure to audiences and her student casts; Margo Robesky, who was creating similar delights with her modern dance recitals. Let me not omit the counselors who kept the way lighted between student and teacher, and Goldie Ingles, our truly superb librarian, who helped keep the way lighted between the student and his studies.

We were in continuous debt to two men not directly on our staff: Avery Allen of the district office, who raised to a very high level our relations with the press and our college visitors, and James Day, columnist for The Bakersfield Californian, who reported so many pleasant things about all of us in his column and thus helped popularize the college.

Farewells to Bakersfield

- Bird: Although I was not to go to the University of California until March 1950, an announcement of that fact was made late in October 1949. Sounds of music, ringing of bells! Gifts and invitations began to arrive as if I were a young person soon to be married. An electric percolater, crystal stemware, magnificent twin silver candelabras, silver nut cups, table linen--you know, gifts for the bride--and all so very lovely in themselves. These things, of course, came from personal friends. But gifts also came from organizations.
- RS: I saw a picture of you in your scrap book in which you are holding aloft a champagne glass and smiling, while to the side of the picture is a cartoon of a bird with its head in a whirl.
- Bird: That was taken at the fall 1949 meeting of the State Junior College Association. I had just been given eight etched crystal champagne glasses as a parting gift. The cartoon was done by Clayton Rippey of the college art department.
- RS: Stemware seems to have been a favored gift for you. You showed me silver mounted goblets you had received.
- Bird: They were a gift from Bakersfield Rotary Club. They were presented at a dinner meeting for Rotarians and their wives and guests at which I was honored with the very handsome set of eight silver mounted goblets. They with the silver candlesticks add the bit of elegance to my life that lifts the heart. Yet in a nice way every gift lifted the heart since it spoke of a mutual pleasure in my association with the donor.
- RS: And you planned to leave the college officially after the first semester.
- Bird: I thought it would take February to pack my furniture and other possessions and to install myself in Berkeley. Actually I didn't leave the office until February 15.
- RS: I assume that the last fortnight became a festival of farewell events.
- Bird: Yes, there were many, but I should like to speak only of those that were at least semipublic. One of the first was a tribute from our students' sports activities when the football's souvenir program November 1949 was dedicated to me. I had often attended football practice to learn some of our strengths and some of the qualities of our individual players in action. The opponent at

Bird: the game that evening was Santa Monica City College. Santa Monica was the city where my mother had established our home after leaving Salt Lake City. So while I cheered a great deal for Bakersfield, I cheered a little for Santa Monica.

The College Alumni Association was joined by the student body in sponsoring a program and reception for the community and all former students in Harvey Auditorium--I remember it was a Sunday, and I remember what beautiful musical tones came from the college's a cappella choir and what generous remarks were made from the podium. The climax was the gift of a radio-phonograph in a very handsome mahogany cabinet and a perfectly adjusted tonal quality. The reception brought a large number of friends and the great joy that came in seeing them again.

The students on campus wanted to give their own private farewell although they had been donors with the alumni of the radio-phonograph. During my last week on campus, the students presented a program called This is Your College in which every department of instruction was represented. There was a smoothness and polish to the performance that was quite professional and an earnestness on the part of the students that touched the heart. District Superintendent McCuen was the speaker the students had invited. There was no one else who would have meant so much to me.

The farewell party from the faculty was different in tone from the others, and I like to think the tone was characteristic of me as I knew it to be of them. It was genuinely light-hearted.

It was held in an exhibition room in the Junior College Building on the old F Street campus. At the entrance door one was handed a two-page "final examination" designed to test one's intelligence quotient for observation and identification. On the walls of the room were hung mounted specimens from the "White Collar Bird Cage" (actually pictures of one hundred and three members of the faculty, singly or in small groups, in ordinary dress or in costume, with ages ranging from about three to about sixty). The person with the highest score won a 'rah, rah, rah' and the one with the lowest, a 'boo' if I remember correctly.

I did not enter the contest because I was transfixed by what I saw on entering the room. Here was a large table in whose center stood a large tree of weathered leaveless branches covered with small birds of every known color. Many were iridescent--birds of red, blue, yellow, lime, purple, green, rose, chartreuse. Some wore the colors of fuschias and some of clematis. The birds were all the work of Ruth Heil Emerson: molded by hand of cotton with a soft glue, baked in her kitchen stove to an indescribably horrid odor, then painted in those brilliant colors. On the table beneath the tree were platters of delicious food.

Bird: In the closing minutes of the party, Mr. Ewert read a copy of the resolution the faculty submitted to the Board of Trustees requesting that the library on the new campus be named for me and that it have within it a small room to be known as The Fine Book Room which would also bear my name.

As Mr. Ewert finished reading the resolution, I knew this was the golden day of my life in education. Where are the words to tell what this meant to me? To have one's name associated with the college library which is "the learning center" itself, the companion of the classroom--the greatness of the honor! Matched only by the faculty's wish to bring it about.

There was another treasured honor which came to me in the fifties from a group of my closest friends, an oil portrait of me to hang in the college library at Bakersfield. The painter was Luke Gibney, a renowned artist of San Francisco. Mr. Gibney had studied at the Dublin School of Art under Sir William Orpen. After coming to San Francisco he became associated with such San Francisco artists as Maynard Dixon and Ralph Stackpole. When he attended the ceremony of presentation of the portrait to the college, he said of his painting that he had "felt the spiritual character of the sitter".

Whether that is so, I can not judge. What I do think and feel deeply is that, as a painting, it has unusual beauty and could take its place in comfort in a gallery of Flemish portraits. Whenever I count my blessings, it is there in my memory and, with it, the friends who honored me and Edna Keough, associate and friend, whose idea for the painting came to fruition.

The New Campus

Bird: The great hope I had always had was for Bakersfield College to have its own permanent home--established, if possible, on a hill. The district had had the money for sometime, but steel for construction was frozen for civilian use just before and during the war. By that time the population in the district had increased so much that the necessity for new high schools took precedence over the colleges.

Now, however, in 1949 it looked as if our time was near. The board had begun to look for land for a college campus. I still thought it would be I who would help build the college. So I put my weight on the scales for a place on the hill. Finally in December when I knew I would no longer be here, I had an off the record talk with my friend, Carl Melcher, president of the Kern County Land Company.

Bird: The land company owned most of the raw land on top of the bluffs above the Kern River. I asked him in confidence how much the land company would charge the district per acre for about 200 acres. No mention of this would be made to anybody except to Mr. McCuen until the Board of Trustees had acted. Mr. Melcher flew to San Francisco the next day to confer with the chairman of the board of the land company, and I reported what I had done to Mr. McCuen. Let me insert here this was my only violation of a proper procedure in my professional life which would have required consultation with Mr. McCuen as the first step.

It happened because Carl Melcher and I were guests at the same dinner party, and when the group broke up into small clusters for coffee in the living room and library, Mr. Melcher and I sat together. So, when an unheard voice whispered, "Here's your chance; take it," I took it.

All this background is to say that when a telephone call came shortly after I was established in Berkeley in spring 1950, it was from Mr. McCuen telling me the board had just purchased the land on the bluffs for the new college campus! Joy!

My neighbor heard my whoop, and came to ask about the excitement. I answered, "A whole new world of promise has just come to the lower San Joaquin Valley." It gave me the feeling that I had often had that Old Man River yo' keeps rollin' along. The twenties had flowed into the thirties with its firm undercurrent and its bits of flotsam. The thirties had flowed into the forties, and here was a treasure of flotsam from the forties flowing into the fifties.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE KERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Herewith Confers

upon

VI THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA—OFFICE OF RELATIONS
GRACE VAN DYKE BIRD

the title

RS: After having President Emeritus came to the University of
California Bakersfield College isn't that right?

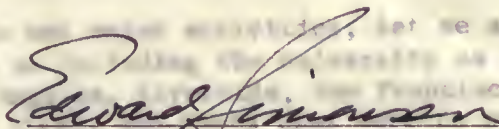
RS: That's right. I had been invited to come to President Byrout
the preceding October. After declining that I would accept the
invitation, I named a date that would fall after the beginning
of the second semester of Bakersfield College. I did not think

**IN RECOGNITION OF HER YEARS OF SERVICE TO BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE AS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER FROM 1921 TO 1950 • IN TRIBUTE TO HER FORE-
SIGHT IN MEETING EDUCATIONAL NEEDS THAT HELPED TO BRING THE COL-
LEGE TO A VITAL PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY • IN COMMENDA-
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EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA OVER THE PAST HALF CENTURY • IN APPRECI-
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SERVED BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE THROUGH THE YEARS • WITH ADMIRATION
FOR THE STEADFAST DEVOTION OF HER MANY FORMER STUDENTS AND COL-
LEAGUES WHO WERE INSPIRED AND ENCOURAGED BY HER • WITH GOOD
WISHES AS SHE PREPARES HER MEMOIRS THROUGH THE ORAL HISTORY PRO-
JECT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY.**

**Awarded in Bakersfield, California, this sixteenth day of December, nineteen hundred
seventy-six.**



**M. Glenn Bultman, President
Board of Trustees
Kern Community College District**



**Edward Simonsen, Chancellor
Kern Community College District**

KERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
OF THE
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Herewith Confers

upon

GRACE VAN DYKE BIRD

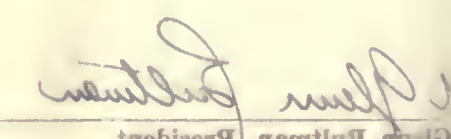
the title

President Emeritus
Bakersfield College

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Edward Simonsen, Chancellor
Kern Community College District


Edna Baltman, President
Board of Trustees
Kern Community College District

VII THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA--OFFICE OF RELATIONS
WITH SCHOOLS

RS: After leaving Bakersfield you came to the University of California in March 1950, isn't that right?

Bird: That's right. I had been invited to come by President Sproul the preceding October. After deciding that I would accept the invitation, I named a date that would fall after the beginning of the second semester at Bakersfield College. I did not think I could leave the college with which I had been so closely associated until I had seen the second semester well on its way and running smoothly.

RS: And you handed over the office to Ralph Prator.

Bird: Not immediately. The board and superintendent were considering several candidates for the position. It was agreed that Theron Taber, who had been a dean of men at the college and coordinator of several wartime programs but was now the associate district superintendent, would be named to fill out the year in my place. As you know I considered him a very strong administrator.

RS: When you came to the university in 1950, how did you see your new job?

Bird: I was being brought to the university to function as a liaison officer between all campuses of the university and the California public junior colleges. I should like to explain here that the Office of Relations with Schools is a statewide office of the university which functioned for all the campuses of the university. For short, we called our office "Ors" and ourselves the "'Orses," and hoped we were off and running.

Thus, as I describe our major activities, let me ask that you try to visualize them as including the university as it was at Berkeley, Davis, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Francisco, and Santa Barbara. Irvine, San Diego, and Santa Cruz were to come later.

Bird: When I first called on President Sproul I asked him if he had anything he particularly wanted to call to my attention or instructions he wanted to give. He replied, "I have only two things I want to say. One is that there is only one University of California whether the campus is at Los Angeles or Davis or Riverside or San Francisco or Berkeley or wherever. They are all and each the University of California." With his booming voice he underscored the words "one university" over again.

He added that since I was an alumna of the Berkeley campus I was probably an "Old Blue." He said, "Well, you are not an 'Old Blue' now." I report this in some detail because it emphasizes a unifying force that the university brings to the people of California.

RS: What was the other of the two things he said?

Bird: I think I can still quote him because what he said was so close to my own thoughts when selecting a new teacher for Bakersfield College. What he said was, "The other thing I want to tell you is that the reason I asked you to come here is because I believe you'll know what needs to be done." Well, I was surprised but pleased with such a statement of faith. I thought I did know some of the things that needed doing, so I thanked him and went to see Dr. Hiram Edwards [director, ORS] with whom I might confer and start pursuing our purposes at once.

The Job of the Associate Director

RS: What did you conceive your purposes to be?

Bird: I thought that if I were to serve as an academic liaison officer between the university and the community college it would involve four fronts: liaison on behalf of the students coming to the university so as to insure the smoothest possible transfer; liaison on behalf of the community colleges to keep them informed of recent or impending changes in university policies or curricula of interest to them and to furnish information about the performance of their transfers to assist in their self-evaluation of their transfer function; liaison with departments of instruction with reference to pre-major requirements taught by each; and, of course, liaison on behalf of the university to help maintain its high standards in fulfilling its recognized services to society.

RS: What are some of the ways you set about achieving these purposes?

Bird: You will observe that most of the ways that had been developed to reach our purposes apply to all of the classifications I have just described. Many of the practices I shall mention were not initiated by me.

The office in which I now served had been established in 1936 with Dr. Hiram Edwards as its director. Practices developed over the years when they seemed needed, but the office had never before had an officer close to the public junior colleges, and President Sproul felt one was needed.

A young professor in the college of engineering UCLA was serving part-time very effectively in relations between the new program of Dean L.M.K. Boelter and that at UC Berkeley for new admissions with advanced standing.

RS: What were some typical liaison activities?

Bird: One which junior colleges say has proved valuable is conferences we arrange between new junior college transfers and the presidents of their colleges during the first (preferably) or second semester of the student's attendance on a university campus. The purpose was to find out how the student was faring and whether the university or his own home college could have done more to make his adjustment smoother academically or personally.

RS: It sounds like a responsible follow-up; how were these conferences arranged?

Bird: The home college president wrote asking our office on a given campus to make arrangements for his visit on a given day. With this done, we then wrote a letter to the new student transfers from that college inviting them to meet with their former president and indicating the date and place and a spread of three hours sometimes during which they might see him.

RS: Was the response good? Did your office attend?

Bird: Our office was not present except long enough to welcome the college's president or any students who reported before his arrival as sometimes happened. As far as the response is concerned, I should call it very good. Usually every student who had been invited came and often a few earlier transfers who had learned their former president was on campus. The letters we received from the home college after the meetings praised their worth.

Before I left Bakersfield I had had meetings with our transfers on the Los Angeles campus and so had the counselors. We found they contributed much to our self-evaluation, and we found spots that needed our re-examination and possible revision.

Bird: The next valuable liaison activity I should like to mention was called "subject conferences." These brought together instructors in a given field in the community colleges and from the lower division in the university. The purpose was to discuss together the expected outcomes of a particular course in that given field. The outcomes would be discussed in terms of modes of thinking as well as substance and with special reference to more advanced courses in the upper division.

Our usual practice was to hold the subject conferences in Berkeley for the northern area and Los Angeles for the south. Our more remote campuses (e.g. Riverside, Irvine, Santa Barbara, etc.) sometimes held subject matter conferences for their community college neighbors. Travel costs had to be considered.

RS: I suppose ORS made all the arrangements within the university.

Bird: Let me use one subject matter conference as an illustration of procedures that, in general, applied to all.

Our first step was to confer with the chairman of the department concerned. Let us use the subject Economics 1A as our example. He designates the particular professor to present the topic from the university point of view and to notify any other teachers of the subject about the conference if they wish to attend. ORS then issued invitations to the UC Davis Orse and to those teaching Economics 1A and to the community colleges of northern California as was our custom.

I departed a little from this custom by including the state colleges of the northern area (San Francisco, San Jose, Chico, and Sacramento) with invitations when the conference was in the north to foster mutual understanding.

RS: That seems like an excellent idea.

Bird: The economics department had asked Professor Frank Kidner to lead off the discussion by explaining what the university expected of a student who had completed satisfactorily a course in Economics 1A. He said an adequate understanding of the principles of economics, of course, but much more. He added that students would be expected to know what professional economists are trying to learn and why and how they go about it; what knowledge and what data are being used as assumptions and what additional data must be sought and examined for possible use in appraising and revising existing criteria on building new economic theories if indicated. Along the way, as you will surmise, the student will have learned the economic theories that have influenced our federal and state governments, and which ones are influencing them now. I hope you can imagine the lively discussion this kind of presentation evoked. One could almost hear thoughts bursting in air like small bombs.

The Native Student Study

- RS: Tell me about the ORS annual studies of the academic performance of junior college transfers and about the special study of university students about which President Sproul wrote you a letter of commendation.
- Bird: Shortly after its establishment in 1936 ORS began preparing reports of the first semester academic performance of new entrants to the University of California from the high schools and junior colleges of the state and from other colleges in and outside of California. The data were reported for each individual high school or college to show the performance of its own students as measured by their grade point average and the grade point average of all entrants in the same category, such as the California high schools and, in terms of the average of all new entrants from the community colleges.
- As an additional aid toward evaluation, the report carried data on the percent of new transfers falling below a "C" average in the first semester of transfer. Enclosed with the report were copies of the actual study lists and grades earned by each transfer from the individual college receiving the report. Now it would be possible over a few years for all colleges to assemble enough data to obtain measures of the success of the local college's several departments of instruction. On my visits to a number of junior colleges I found such studies being made.
- RS: What an enormous amount of work. I'm sure it was appreciated by the high schools and junior colleges.
- Bird: Very much, and also by the statewide committee of the Academic Senate called the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) to whom we were responsible for such data. But I had become more and more aware that there were some professors and department chairmen at Berkeley that lacked confidence in the quality of junior college teaching that my several studies made of Bakersfield College had indicated was, by and large, strong. When discussion seemed to indicate that a more selective requirement might be proposed for transfer students I concluded we needed certain precise data that were not available before a proper decision could be made. We undertook to gather those data.
- RS: What sort of data?
- Bird: Since some of the students who transfer to the university from the community colleges had graduated from high school with college entrance grades and the pattern of courses required for admission to the university as freshmen, they could properly be paired in

Bird: academic performance with the qualified high school graduate who had done all his college work in the university. Other students were transferring from the community colleges who had not had the proper pattern of courses in high school or had not earned the necessary "B" average high school grades and were therefore ineligible to enter the university at the time of high school graduation. These had qualified to transfer with advanced standing to the university by reason of their program and quality of work (college "C" average) in the community college. This latter group had a lower expectancy of success than the first group or than the students who had entered the university two years earlier directly from high school.

It seemed essential to me, therefore, that we should learn about any differences in the performance of these three groups that had implications for policies or coordination. I, therefore, proposed making a successive semester study of the grade point averages of the native students (i.e. those doing all their work in the university from entrance as freshmen from California high schools) and the community college transfers who had been eligible at high school graduation, and those who had been ineligible at high school graduation. To discover whether our findings were probably typical, I proposed the inquiry be made for two different years of entrance at the junior class level.

Since the collection and processing of facts would be time consuming, Dr. Edwards suggested I discuss the project with President Sproul and include a statement of need for a statistical clerk. The university did not have IBM equipment at that time (this was 1952 and 1953). President Sproul showed considerable interest in the project and invited me to describe it to his Administrative Advisory Council (chancellors, faculty representatives of the campuses' Academic Senate, vice-presidents) at its next meeting. The council endorsed the proposal. We were granted a small but helpful increase in the budget for a part-time statistical clerk for two years and we began preparing cards of data for every student who entered the university from a California high school at our campuses at Berkeley, Davis, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara in the fall 1948 and in the fall 1949. We recorded information about each student's persistence or withdrawal, re-entry if any, transfer to another UC campus if any, and his grade point average through the next succeeding eight semesters plus a ninth semester if needed to complete a degree. We also prepared cards for each transfer from a California junior college (classified as eligible at high school graduation or ineligible at high school graduation) who entered the Berkeley and Los Angeles campuses as juniors fall 1950 and fall 1951 to show the persistence or withdrawal and the grade point averages in the successive upper division semesters. We processed by hand more than seven thousand cards. The results

Bird: of processing the cards for the matters indicated and for many more facts were presented in a report called The Native Student Study which was distributed widely to officers throughout the university.

RS: Could you tell me anything about the specific findings or the use to which they were put?

Bird: It is quite proper to tell those things that might help determine any changes needed in admission of freshmen and transfers to the university. Most important of these are the data relating to the persistence and academic achievement in the junior year of transfer students when compared to those of native students. These data were made known to the community colleges and the Restudy staff and the Master Plan staff.

There was a second study similar to The Native Student Study but limited to the upper division years only for native students and new junior college transfers entering the junior year in fall 1955 (I believe that is the true year). The purpose was to see if the new findings would parallel those for the students who had entered their junior years in 1950 and 1951. With the flawless and cheerful cooperation of Mrs. Katharine Walker of our Los Angeles office, we were able to report for that campus as well as Berkeley.

RS: Did the data bear out the earlier findings?

Bird: Almost precisely for the Berkeley campus and fairly closely for Los Angeles.

Let me use some shortened terms to identify the three particular groups of students compared. When I say NSC I mean native student corps. When I say JC Elig. or JC Inelig. I mean junior college transfers who were eligible and those who were ineligible for university admission when they graduated from high school.

The findings for Berkeley for the NSC and the JC Elig. show that the persistence record and the academic achievement record are almost the same; at Los Angeles the NSC record is a little better on both counts than that of the JC Elig., but both are at the "B minus" average. It could be safely concluded that there should be no discrimination in the admission of students between these two groups.

The data for the persistence and academic achievement records of the JC Inelig. show both to be lower than those of NSC and JC Elig. Whatever problem this may present if limitations in enrollments are required is compounded by the fact that there were more transfers from this group than from the JC Elig. group--about one-third more at Berkeley and nearly twice as many at Los Angeles.

Bird: The persistence record was about ten percent less good than the NSC and the academic record averaged "C". Some further study of this group would need to be made to see if data like these still obtain.

RS: Since The Native Student Study was an inquiry about students entering as freshmen, were there any findings that seemed to point to desirable modifications in admission requirements at that point?

Bird: My findings showed that the present admission requirements have been sufficiently discriminating as to select students with a higher potential of persistence and a satisfactory academic achievement than reported in comparable other studies. For example, I recall that nationwide studies indicated that only 30-35% of college freshmen in state universities are graduated. The persistence through eight semesters averages only 40%. At UC Berkeley and Los Angeles the figure was 60%. The only record which surpassed ours was our private institution and neighbor, Stanford University with 70%.

Studies made in several institutions are quoted as saying that nearly three-fourths of the dropouts are in academic difficulties. It seems then that a detailed study might be useful here. Goodness! What a lot of shop talk about one phase of education. Will any of it save some young person from failure and open a door to sunlight for another?

RS: Yet I do not want this talk of admission requirements to end without asking you what your own opinion is about the high school subject requirements.

Bird: Well, without going into a lot of jargon about correlations that show a sound prediction of probable success, let me say why I, personally, believe rather firmly in the current prescribed pattern of subjects. You will recognize it as a birdsong you have heard before.

RS: You mean the requirements in English, algebra, geometry, foreign language, laboratory science, and so on?

Bird: Yes, because the completion of such a pattern with "B" grades or better will establish that the student has had a certain amount of repeated experience in the basic modes of thought--ways of thinking--and an understanding of their purposes in his further education and their application to adult life.

Let me note in closing that the prescribed subject pattern still allowed one-third of the student's credits for graduation to be of the student's own choosing.

RS: Do you know what kind of electives were commonly chosen? I am wondering if they elected enriching courses in literature or the arts.

Bird: I can not answer that about the students entering the university since the only part of the high school record retained is the record in the prescribed subjects. However, I made some studies of Bakersfield College students which showed students bound for transfer to senior colleges had chosen their electives in music, drama, or art or in other academic courses of particular interest to them.

Visiting Community Colleges

Bird: Unless you have other questions about university admission policies, I should like to turn to another practice in our relations with the community colleges that I hope (and believe) was useful to my purposes and found was a delight to me, my visits to the community colleges on their home ground.

It was here I met singleness of purpose and variety of method or practice. Everywhere, enthusiasm; some places, a little short on imagination; big colleges with students crowding the campuses, small colleges with everyone calling everyone else by first name, including me. Because I had so recently been a member of the junior college family, visits to some colleges or their communities brought calls or campus visits from former Bakersfield students to see me. It was not exactly like a homecoming to a non-home but a little flavor of it.

It was my original aim to visit each college every third year, but this became impossible with the rapidly growing number of new colleges and the distant location of some of the older ones, such as Blythe and Brawley and El Centro in the south and Redding and Susanville in the north. I often had the generous help of Price Gittinger of our Davis campus and Katharine Walker of our Los Angeles campus. They found, as I did, that these local colleges were as anxious to have a strong record for their transfer students as we were to have them. We discovered the colleges were also trying, to quote a colloquialism, "to do their own thing for their own people."

And yet since I was a long time community college head, the local president often asked my advice on a number of other administrative or academic matters which I was glad to give.

RS: Could you tell something about the process of visiting a campus, deciding upon goals and schedule, and so on?

Bird: After a date was set, the president of the community college planned a schedule. Sometimes the schedule called for my staying a full day. More commonly, I was asked for the morning through luncheon or for luncheon and the afternoon. The smaller colleges may have scheduled an hour or so with the president and district superintendent. The kind of schedule which I thought provided the most valuable liaison in terms of our purposes was one in which I had had adequate sessions with the administrators, the counselors, and particularly the chairmen of the departments offering instruction in transfer courses. With these groups we could cover the major specifics. Since I usually visited several colleges in a common geographical area, the suggested schedules were sent to me in advance.

RS: What did the teachers particularly have to offer?

Bird: My experience has taught me that by and large teachers in the community colleges love their profession and appreciate its meaning. They want to talk about what they do and improve it where they can. It is stimulating to be with them.

RS: I wonder if you might tell about some of the visits you made and any unusual or characteristic thing about them.

Bird: That will be very pleasant to do. A visit to City College of San Francisco brought renewed admiration for their President Louis "Dutch" Conlan and Dean Lloyd Luckman who was overseer of the many strong transfer curricula the college maintained. The top of the visit is always being guest at a delicious luncheon prepared and served for the occasion by students from the excellent hotel and restaurant management curriculum. I was made sharply aware again as I had been from time to time in the past that certain curricula in urban-oriented colleges should be thought of as serving a very wide regional purpose or even a state one. State scholarships could be established to enable students from other community college districts to pursue such specialized programs as the one in hotel and restaurant management.

Another gratifying visit was to Glendale College; for here I met the president of the Board of Trustees. He was Manuel Avila, a Bakersfield College student in 1925-26 where he had the leading role in Captain Applejack and an equally promising one in the Howling Fifty. He had become a prominent attorney in Glendale.

One of the merriest treks in the extreme south of the state was made with Price Gittinger of the Davis campus to three small junior colleges at Blythe and then at Brawley and El Centro. It was still winter, but no one who had ever driven through Blythe at any other

Bird: season could believe we used the heater in the car. There was nothing notable about the then very small Palo Verde College unless it was the exceptionally strong football team of which some dozen players on the squad came from Arizona and were housed in a college dormitory.

We drove to the Imperial Valley towns the next day and found enthusiastic administrators, but colleges of limited curricula. I asked President Weakley at El Centro why the two junior colleges had not merged into one college large enough to maintain a broader program. He told me there were difficulties which sprang from community competition. Although it did not come about during my professional life, they have now come together in a new institution called Imperial College located about half way between Brawley and El Centro.

Meantime Mr. Gittinger had made arrangements for us to visit the University of California Experimental Farm project in the Valley. I discovered we had already been invited by the director to dinner at his home and afterwards to cross the border from Calexico to Mexicali to watch some matches of jai alai. I think it is probably an incident of this evening which is causing me to choose these relatively minor visits to colleges as illustrations of this ORS function.

How shall I begin? Jai alai and dinner were both enjoyed. Yet as we drove back to El Centro the thing that kept beckoning for my mind's attention was not the skill shown in that Mexican sport or the delicious dinner with hospitable hosts, but the face of a small Mexican child--about eight or nine years old--who trotted along the street beside us chattering and begging all the while.

He never once had a look of pathos. He was as merry as a chipmunk and as beautiful as a model of Raphael. He tagged along until we reached the courts for the games where he took my hand. I asked our host if it would be permissible to take him with us. The reply was something like this, "No, because his parents have put him out in the streets to beg." So I pressed a bill into his small hand, gave him a hug, and "Hasta la vista," and he was gone.

During the games I learned that he was the best of the children beggars because of his smile and happy chatter. When I asked, "Is he really happy?" the reply was, "We think so. I've been told his parents love him and are kind."

That must have been twenty years ago, but that bright boy persists in memory as a less ugly symbol of a faltering society. He was too shining a symbol to represent the beggar children in Asiatic countries where it becomes a permanent way of life. Was the difference due to a faith in tomorrow and another tomorrow--a faith possessed even if not yet recognized.

The Articulation Conferences

- RS: That is certainly possible. I want to ask you about another interesting function of your office, the articulation conference. I am told you were its founder. What is its genesis and how has it developed?
- Bird: I do not think of myself as its founder, but rather as an enlarger of an idea that was already in practice. The articulation conference grew out of two committees that had been functioning for some time. One was the Committee on Affiliations of the California Secondary School Administrators (CASSA) and the University of California established in the twenties, I think. The other was the University-Junior College Conference Committee established upon the suggestion of President Sproul in 1932. These two groups conferred in separate semiannual meetings on matters of common concern. Neither had power to act for its constituency, but both were expected to report on the understandings developed to their respective high schools and junior colleges. Action might result in either the university or in CASSA or in California State Junior College Association (CJCA) as a result of the mutual understandings or possibly in all three segments.
- RS: What were the critical points of articulation?
- Bird: In the upward movement of students the critical point for the high schools was that of admission to the University of California in terms of pattern of courses and quality of performance. Until the Western College Association became the official accrediting agency in the fifties for western high schools and colleges, there was an added reason for good articulation. Collegiate institutions outside of California required that the California high school certify that the graduate was eligible to enter the University of California.
- RS: It seems to me that is a relatively simple articulation for the high school. Not so though, for a student transferring from one college to another where actual university-level courses must be evaluated.
- Bird: Indeed yes, and the things we were talking about a few minutes ago illustrate some of them.

To summarize briefly: at the point of admission with advanced standing, the student must offer evidence of quality of performance that is not less than a "C" average (or higher in particular cases) and substantive courses in fulfillment of the general and pre-major courses offered for equivalent evaluation at the university. Both of these coordinating committees were believed to be very important to the high schools and to the community colleges.

Bird: Now when I was president of the California Junior College Association, some of the colleges reported to me that they were having difficulties in the transfer of their students to some state colleges. I asked one of our presidents to make an inquiry of all our two-year colleges to see if the difficulties were wide-spread. His report at our next annual meeting gave evidence of some additional problems although the situation could not be called wide-spread.

I thought a conference committee on relations between state colleges and junior colleges could find a probable solution, but two state college presidents opposed my suggestion at that time (1935). When I renewed the proposal again in the forties and extended it still further to include the high schools through CASSA, everyone accepted it. Thus the articulation conference became a sort of four-way intersection.

It met twice a year for two days each while I was a member, and each segment met in half-day sessions with the three other units, and all met together for a joint session.

Since accreditation has become the function of the Western College Association, that topic is no longer the worry of the articulation conference, and it now convenes only once a year. ORS serves as the conference expediter. Within the university, it serves as coordinator of the work of the sub-committees and standing liaison committees.

Liaison Committees

RS: You have hinted that the liaison committees are the center of proposed solutions to the more difficult and sometimes recurring problems. They are arms of which overall committees on relations?

Bird: In my time only of the UC-JC Conference Committee. I do not know what liaison exists between the university and the state college system except at the president-state chancellor level.

RS: In what areas were there UC-JC liaison committees while you were at ORS?

Bird: Liaison committees in agriculture, business administration, letters and science, pre-engineering. Although there was no standing committee in architecture, no one could have been more generous with staff time than Dean William Wurster during the change from a School of Architecture to a College of Environmental Design which

Bird: included architecture, landscape design, urban design. He allowed time and travel expense for Professor George Downs to explain in considerable detail the new program with its curricular revisions to southern California and northern California colleges. He, himself, also met with groups as did Jesse Reichel the teacher in the first class in design.

Nor can I express enough appreciation to our Schools of Business Administration and Dean Ewald Grether and Dean Neil Jacoby for the years of help they gave in the assimilation of transfer students to their schools.

Pre-engineering was our first area for liaison when Dean L.M.K. Boelter became dean of engineering on the Los Angeles campus and, with his faculty, set about developing a program that differed from that on the Berkeley campus for which most transfers had been preparing. He lent one of his young brilliant professors, Harold P. Rodes part-time to ORS to serve as a liaison officer in pre-engineering with the junior colleges. Just after I came to the university (1951) he was named president of the Detroit Institute of Technology, and Dean Boelter appointed Professor Bonham Campbell to take his place. Both of these men became great assets to the university and to the community colleges. On behalf of the latter Professor Campbell helped establish the Industry-Education Council and the Committee on Technical Institute Education in southern California and served on both. On behalf of the university, he and Dr. Rodes eliminated almost all problems of articulation in engineering. They also assisted in making comparative studies of the academic achievement of transfers from the community colleges. Professor Roy Bainor of the Davis campus served on the Liaison Committee in Pre-Engineering to keep the Davis program well coordinated with those of the other UC campuses.

As for letters and science, now that the university has still more campuses with still more differences in the ways to liberal arts and hearts, there may be a larger need for liaison activity than we might guess. Let me explain what we had done before I left the university. This liaison committee had come into existence because there were differences in the subjects designated on a list as those from which one could make a choice in fulfillment of a specific group requirement for junior standing. The Berkeley list did not embrace courses allowable at Los Angeles and vice versa. Thus an intercampus transfer might find himself short of having met the proper courses on the new campus when he had done so on his original campus. UC Santa Barbara differed from both, and now we have Colleges of Letters and Science at Riverside, Irvine, San Diego, Davis all with their own individualities.

The problem was discussed fall 1949 when I met with the letters and science deans, Alva R. Davis (Berkeley) and Paul Dodd (Los Angeles). We all favored a plan of reciprocity. It was agreed that

Bird: each would accept the completion of the letters and science prescribed lower division requirements of the other. This could also apply to the transfer from a community college who had met either all the requirements prescribed at Berkeley or all those prescribed at Los Angeles. If a community college, however, desired to have a variant course that was not on either the Berkeley or the Los Angeles list it would have to submit detailed information about the content, methods for evaluation, etc., before it could be accepted for transfer.

As I remember it, Dean Edward Strong (Berkeley) and Dean Dodd again (Los Angeles) reaffirmed this policy. However, the College of Letters and Science at Berkeley began a program of revision under Dean Lincoln Constance, and the reciprocity agreement was temporarily suspended. I do not know the situation today.

RS: What are some other aspects of your work with ORS that you'd like to mention?

Meeting for Foreign Student Advisers

Bird: Some are interludes and some are just changes of pace. One of the latter was a meeting we sponsored at International House for foreign student advisers in colleges.

RS: How did that happen to come about?

Bird: I had learned in my visits to colleges that most had too few foreign students enrolled to justify a full-time adviser. Yet the problems presented by the evaluation of credits from foreign colleges, language difficulties, special adjustment were very time consuming. I wondered what might be done about it.

At this point Dr. Allan Blaisdell, Director of International House, came to see me. He told me his office was receiving increasing requests for advice from four-year colleges. I asked him if he thought a one-day meeting of foreign student advisers would help answer the problem.

RS: So you sponsored such a meeting?

Bird: Yes, and if notes of appreciation are a measure, the number we received would give it high marks. I think the most significant thing was Dr. Spindt's [Herman] statement of the progress being made by his national committee of the Association of Admissions Officers and Registrars to develop a handbook of uniform evaluation of courses in foreign universities in terms of their application toward an academic degree here.

Fulbright Scholars in Pacific Coast Universities

Bird: While we are talking about foreign students, one of my very pleasant interludes was an invitation to attend a two-day or three-day conference at Stanford for the Fulbright scholars attending colleges or universities in our western states. Since the dates fell between quarters, we could all be housed together in a dormitory with meals in a dining commons at which one of us was host at each table for twelve or so. Communication was difficult with the Japanese scholars who understood English but had difficulty speaking it. All the others were rather fluent.

There were plenary sessions with learned speakers presenting the basic topics and section meetings of about twenty for discussion. Professor Knowles Ryerson and I were in the same section over which a Stanford professor presided. It didn't come as a surprise that, with such a tableful of scholarly minds, discussion would be lively and flow freely. I was particularly impressed by how well-informed and thoughtful were the two young men who were scholars from Colombia and Ecuador. They appeared to understand the nature of the problem and to realize what would have to be the nature of any successful solution.

Foreign Visitors to the University

Bird: The university has scores of foreign visitors every year who come for a great variety of reasons. Among them are a few who inquire about California's tripartite system of higher education: university, state college, local community college. I was usually asked to meet with them. Dr. Tatsuo Morito was one of them. He had been president of the University of Hiroshima when the atom bomb fell on that city. After peace came, our government brought him to the United States to visit several American universities before the rebuilding of his own university. We spent two days together during which I had a luncheon for him to meet Dr. Allan Blaisdell of International House and Professor William Blaisdell, director of the Institute of International Affairs at UC Berkeley. He gave me a lovely 18th Century Japanese print to thank me for my help and for the publications I had arranged to have sent to him.

May I add one thing he told me that touches the heart?

RS: Of course.

Bird: On his visits to the twenty or so American college campuses, he had made arrangements to have sent to him seeds or plantings of trees

Bird: characteristic of each campus. He hoped to have the entrance to the new university at Hiroshima made through an avenue of trees from American college campuses. I salute such a man.

Relations with the Legislature

RS: I believe President Sproul referred other matters to you that had not customarily been referred to ORS. Wasn't one legislation?

Bird: Yes. The referral came from the president's office, but the initiator may have been Vice-President James Corley, UC's representative to the legislature.

Copies of bills introduced in the state legislature affecting the public junior colleges were referred to my desk for study and recommendations regarding action. After reaching a conclusion from my analysis of the bill, I usually telephoned the executive secretary or chairman of the Legislative Committee of the Junior College Association to ask what his analysis was. If we agreed, I reported this to Vice-President Corley along with my analysis of the bill. If we disagreed I also told him that. I am particularly glad you asked this question, for it lets me show the university's continuing desire to support the three segments of higher education to achieve the purposes assigned to each.

Special Conferences

Bird: Conference for President Sproul and all junior college presidents: The purpose was to have President Sproul make an official policy statement of the university's interest in and cooperation with the junior colleges of the state. There were many new junior college presidents (some even new to California) who scarcely knew President Sproul. We thought a meeting was desirable. It proved to be more than that.

Meetings for junior college presidents to become acquainted with the relatively new chancellors at Berkeley, Clark Kerr, and at Los Angeles, Ray Allen, M.D. Then we had a similar statewide meeting for Chancellor Kerr when he became President Kerr. All of these meetings were characterized by deep sincerity, warm mutual respect and a happy sense of being together on a great mission.

RS: You have conveyed to me your feeling of joy in your work and the faith you and your fellow workers in the junior colleges shared so fully. It seems to me one of the ways you often used was to improve mutual understanding, isn't that so?

Bird: It was always the goal whether reached or not. It is the key to order in diversity. Without order diversity becomes chaos. Discussion is futile unless we are discussing from mutually understood premises. Thus in sponsoring conferences for such specialized UC colleges as Hastings College of Law or UC San Francisco Medical Center with medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, we sought to have the deans discuss the criteria, both published and unpublished, for admission to the several professional schools.

Acting Director of ORS

RS: I understand Dr. Edwards retired in 1952 or 1953 and you were named acting director of Relations with Schools. Will you tell about that?

Bird: I am uncertain about the precise year also, but I know I was acting director for several years. President Sproul asked me to accept the directorship, but I wanted to continue my work in liaison with the junior colleges rather than have time consumed with budget matters and so on. He repeated the invitation in 1955 for me to be the director, adding that I was acceptable to the academic community as well as the administrations on all campuses. This was the most persuasive of arguments, but I stayed with my earlier decision.

Relief came in 1956 when Dr. Spindt, my long time associate, was named statewide Director of Admissions and Relations with Schools. With Dr. Spindt's death during 1959-60, President Kerr asked me to take over Dr. Spindt's duties. I suggested that instead, better feelings would result if he appointed Dr. Edgar Lazier, a long time associate director of admissions, as director of admissions and then named one of our staff as director of relations with schools. He named me. I promptly delegated budget matters to our Los Angeles office.

I had reached normal retirement age in 1957, but President Kerr asked me to stay on beyond that time. At Dr. Spindt's death, he asked me to remain still longer, and I agreed to stay until December 1960. So, to adopt a currently popular phrase, I was back at the starting blocks. It was expected that by 1960 the reorganization of the office of president would be completed. This was done spring 1960 and Professor Frank L. Kidner was named vice-president for educational relations, and Dr. Lloyd Barnard to head Relations with Schools. The Bird was out of the cage!

VIII OTHER EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Pasadena School Survey

- RS: You mentioned in our discussion of the forties that you were a professional consultant on the Washington state school survey. Now in the fifties you were consultant on the Pasadena city school survey. Was this also as consultant for junior college education?
- Bird: Yes, it was, and for every phase of the junior college operation except finance and the college plant.
- RS: Doubtless it differed from the Washington state survey.
- Bird: Indeed it did. Pasadena was a unified city school district responsible for the grades from kindergarten through the junior college. Moreover it operated in an unorthodox arrangement of grades: six elementary grades (1-6), four high school grades (7-10), and a four-year junior college (11-14).
- Only one other district in California (Compton) resembled it. Pasadena's junior college was established in 1924 and was thus older than most community colleges of that time.
- RS: What caused Pasadena to want such a comprehensive and costly survey?
- Bird: The community was upset over the changes taking place in the nature of its population and it feared their schools were declining in quality.
- RS: What sort of changes were occurring?
- Bird: Much the same as those occurring throughout the state, particularly those due to the influx of new populations with a disproportion of minority groups from former underprivileged areas.

- Bird: Pasadena felt the change more than did other cities because it had always been known for a superior quality of life and of cultural interests. Institutions such as the Huntington Library and Gallery, the Pasadena Playhouse, and California Institute of Technology were representative of its quality of excellence. I thought there was another reason also for wanting so detailed a survey although mention of it was never made. I thought I saw evidence that it was consciously avoided to help keep the survey as objective as possible.
- RS: What was the silence all about?
- Bird: I thought it was about the six-four-four plan of organization. At any rate I noticed some pulling and hauling going on. Now I do not want to go into detail about the survey, but I do want to describe the methods used because I think they would be of interest to the general public as well as to professional educators.
- RS: Knowing your strong feeling about attaining mutual understandings, I assume the method was related to that.
- Bird: Precisely. The co-directors of the survey, Dr. Lloyd Morrisett of UC Los Angeles and Dr. Clyde Hill of Yale determined that the method used to conduct the survey would involve directly the citizens of Pasadena. There were to be the same numbers of citizens as professional educators on every survey committee. There would be one advisory committee of citizens for each of the several consultants and as many sub-committees as these advisory committees determined to be needed. It was these citizen-educator committees which dug out the information and facts needed for proper evaluation. If I remember correctly I had eight (maybe nine) sub-committees.
- I can not say enough in praise of this plan. However, I found it calls for far, far more time than otherwise. And not only that, but it calls for diplomacy and patience of a high order. But I knew we were achieving a true and secure mutual understanding that would lead to the acceptance of the recommendations we might make.
- RS: What an interesting approach to a study about whose need the city had already become emotional. Can you give me an example of a session with your main advisory committee?
- Bird: I could use the first meeting since it illustrates how ready the citizens were to reveal their areas of concern and to find out what to do about them. I had been told by Dr. Morrisett that the members of my advisory committee were all leaders in Pasadena and that some of them had been very vocal about their concern.

- Bird: As you might assume, I had developed a reasonably detailed outline of the various aspects of a junior college that I thought should be studied. I gave copies to the chairman to distribute. The chairman of the advisory committees was in all cases a citizen. As we settled down to business, people talked freely and, in some cases, belligerently. Example: when I said at one point, "We should take all the facts into consideration in making our judgments," one man said sharply, "Whose facts? We don't want any phony facts." The effect on me was traumatic. How could anyone mistrust the data from his own schools! All I said was, "Our facts." Another citizen asked, "Why does Pasadena have to educate students who don't live in this city?" I realized the remark was more a complaint than a question, but I made a note to include the out-of-district student attending the 13th and 14th grades in our study.
- RS: Was your outline accepted?
- Bird: Yes, and sub-committees were to be appointed to study each of the several topics: general education, vocational education, student personnel work, adult education, educational accounting (records, research, evaluation), student affairs, administration, and organization--all these with special reference to the junior college.
- RS: Did the advisory committee indicate which aspect it wished to study first?
- Bird: Yes it did, and by its choice it revealed that there was truly a concern over a possible loss in the quality of education as measured by graduates of the 12th and 14th grades who had been students in Pasadena's four-year (11-14 grades) junior college.
- RS: What did they ask of you?
- Bird: They wanted to know how well the Pasadena students performed in senior colleges in comparison with students from schools in communities fairly similar to Pasadena. And they wanted to know this for their 12th grade graduates who entered universities as freshmen and their traditional junior college transfers with advanced standing.

So remembering the earlier remark about "phony facts," I asked the committee members to designate the schools and colleges with which they wished to be compared. Names were tossed out first for the high schools: "Piedmont, Santa Monica, Lowell in San Francisco, San Diego"...there was a pause, and I asked, "Beverly Hills?" and one of the men replied, "No, that's too rich." I couldn't resist laughing and, happily, everyone else laughed too--a little shame-faced. We then repeated the process of obtaining the names of junior colleges with which to compare the records of Pasadena's

Bird: 14th grade transfers. My suggestion that we use performance at UC Berkeley and Los Angeles, Stanford and the University of Southern California was approved.

I was ready to report back at the next fortnight meeting of the advisory committee. Of course I did not name the high schools or junior colleges involved in the comparisons. I only identified them as A, B, C. etc., or X, Y, Z. etc. There were about twelve of each--I don't remember exactly.

I believe the results showed that Pasadena ranked in the top three or four of the selected institutions--possibly the top three--at all four universities. This was testimony for its academic strength. The reaction of the advisory committee was one of pride tempered by the regret that their college was not always one of the two best or, at the other extreme, tempered by the regret that it had not been lower enough to justify their criticism.

Well, this tiny fragment of a massive cooperative survey illustrates the interesting and demanding role of a consultant. If there were some worries in Pasadena, there was far more pleasure. My appreciation of the help given by Dr. W.B. Longsdorf, then president of the college, and his staff, was very great indeed for it was constant and significant.

After the task had multiplied in its sub-committees, I had requested an associate consultant, and my duties were thereafter shared with Dr. Basil H. Peterson, president of Orange Coast College, who, in my opinion, was the outstanding junior college president in the state.

California Higher Education Surveys

RS: There were other surveys dealing with higher education in California in the fifties, were you on the staff of any of these?

Bird: Not on any staff but I did have an occasional meeting with Dr. George Strayer, director of the survey called, if I remember, "The Study of Education of Higher than High School Grade." This was 1948 I think.

Since the junior colleges and state colleges were then under the State Board of Education, the Strayer Report recommended that official coordination rested with the State Board of Education and the Regents of the University of California. Below this policy level was the working level of the divisions of state colleges and division of secondary education and president of the university and his staff.

Bird: However, in spite of the joint acceptance of the recommendations, there were breaches in practice. This led to the second state-wide survey of the tripartite system called The Restudy of Education of Higher than High School Grade. Dr. Thomas R. McConnell was director. This was a very vital study which assembled data on many new factors and made major recommendations concerning administrative reorganization. This was in 1953.

In 1955 it was approved by the respective governing bodies and the legislature in 1955. Once again, however, there were breakdowns in practice. These led to the new study under the direction of Dr. Thomas C. Holy and resulted in the Master Plan for California Higher Education accepted in 1959 and adopted by the legislature in 1960. It was adopted also by the regents of the University of California and the trustees of the state college system. Details were reported widely throughout California.

RS: What was your role in this?

Bird: I had already assembled information about the characteristics of students on the Berkeley campus from the Counseling Center (aptitude test data, other standardized inventories, etc.,) from the dean of students' office (outside employment, reasons for dropout, student leadership), from the registrar (academic records). Dean of students, Milton Hahn of UC Los Angeles had obtained somewhat similar data for that campus and he sent me copies. I put all this descriptive information together for Drs. McConnell and Holy.

Participation in National Organizations

RS: You were also involved in some national organizations during these years. Let's talk about that.

Bird: I was invited to write a chapter for the annual year book of the National Society for the Study of Education. The 1956 year book featured the public junior college. I was assigned the topic "Preparation for Advanced Study." In addition to what I knew about the situation in California, I sent inquiry forms to institutions in states with substantial numbers of public junior colleges. I received a gratifying number of replies: more than eighty from public junior colleges, more than twenty from state universities, several from private four-year colleges, and a few from state departments of education.

They were from almost everyone to whom I had written. While gratified I think I wasn't surprised; for the percent of full-time students enrolled in transfer curricula was a little more than 75% in institutions outside of California and was even 66% in California at that time.

RS: Before you left Bakersfield I understand you were appointed to the Pacific Coast Committee of the American Council on Education.

Bird: Yes. It was the year just before I came to the University of California. When I left Bakersfield, I wrote to Dr. Lynn White, then chairman of the committee, offering my resignation. I had assumed I had been appointed because I was a junior college administrator. Dr. White refused to accept saying that the board thought I could represent the junior colleges just as well in Berkeley as in Bakersfield, and that what was wanted was "the Bird point of view," and besides I was a woman and "women add zest." I felt like a bottle of Coca-Cola.

RS: What was the purpose of the Pacific Coast Committee?

Bird: The PCC was a relatively new development of the American Council on Education created to bring the western institutions closer to the council's headquarters in Washington, D.C. Its purpose was to keep the council abreast of developments in western colleges and to suggest potential areas for research that would be beneficial to our western members. I served my three years; one with Dr. White and two with Dr. Harry K. Newburn, then President of the University of Oregon and chairman of PCC. With these two men the average for wit and wisdom was indeed high, and we produced proposals which led to two needed studies in neighboring states. It was a most enjoyable way to work.

RS: Were you the only woman on the committee?

Bird: Yes, once again and alas. But the Board of the Educational Testing Service included two of us.

I think my shortest description of it would be to say it is an agency for developing standardized tests and processing thousands and thousands of them for such organizations as the American Council on Education (Scholastic Aptitude Test), College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB tests), American Medical Association, the army, the navy, and admission tests for graduate schools. It has large and handsome headquarters adjacent to Princeton and the most sophisticated equipment to perform its work. There is a substantial staff of professionals in test design and validation.

RS: That must have been an interesting service. When did your term begin?

Bird: The invitation to serve came spring 1949 for a five year term beginning with the academic year 1949-50. I had no idea at that time I would be coming to the university in 1950. When, however, I accepted President Sproul's invitation that fall, I wrote to

Bird: Dr. Henry Chauncey, president of the board of Educational Testing Service, suggesting that I be replaced by another California junior college president. His reply was that it was I whom the board wished to have as a member so I remained one. All five years were full of pleasure and learning for me.

RS: I should like to know who the other woman on the board was.

Bird: She was Katherine McBride, president of Bryn Mawr. And what an alert-minded and delightful person she was!

RS: Who were some of the other members of the board?

Bird: Since membership rotates, let me mention only those who served most of the same years as I did. Dr. Henry Chauncey, of course, and John Gardner (Common Cause), James Bryant Conant (president emeritus, Harvard), Leverett Saltonstall and, during my first year, our own Clark Kerr, then chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley.

RS: Such distinguished company! Would you tell us a little bit about the board's work?

Bird: Well, in my first two to three years on the board, it was concerned with finance, primarily with capital outlay. A new building to house its services was being constructed on grounds close to Princeton University. Some new massive technical equipment was needed to meet the growing demands, and the board was weighing choices. The other duties included consideration of new agencies requesting services and overall supervision of the professional staff in test design and validation as well as operation.

When the new plant was completed, we were taken on a tour. Equipment was installed in more than one laboratory. At first sight of the enormous new unit (whose purchase we had voted) standing there, wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling, sprinkled with its instruments, I thought of a cartoon in The New Yorker I had recently seen. It showed a smock-coated scientist giving a similar machine a sharp kick to get it started. I was tempted, but reined in my impulse. I knew that vast machine was helping to determine the destiny of thousands of eager young people.

An enjoyable and valuable by-product for me of membership on the board was knowing and talking over many other educational matters with other board members.

IX RETIREMENT

RS: You retired from the university in 1960, did you not?

Bird: In December 1960. I had remained almost three years beyond normal retirement at President Kerr's request. I felt that my retirement was much more than from the university. I was retiring from a long life in the profession of education. I felt as if I were retiring from professional life, but this oral history has let me lead some of it over again.

RS: I understand there was a farewell party when you left.

Bird: Actually there were two: one on the Los Angeles campus for my associates and the office staff at the home of Mrs. Katharine Walker and her husband, Bill. Besides delicious food and affectionate wishes I received as a gift the two volume set of Van Gogh's letters, a choice that brought joy.

The celebration at dinner in the Men's Faculty Club at Berkeley was the final one where I was given an Eighteenth Century Chinese scroll painting. Its serenity not only brings balm; its ascending hills and trees invite one to new and lovely horizons. But the scroll was not the only gift for with great sensitivity Vice-President Kidner had invited my closest former associates at Bakersfield College to be present. More than a dozen were there, among them my secretary of nine years, Mrs. Lorraine Anderson. Nor is that all for Mrs. Vera Kocha Williams who had been my secretary for nearly eight years at Berkeley, was brought over from Reno to be present. And in addition to the 'Orses from other campuses, there were eight or so junior college presidents, five state college presidents, four or five high school principals from CASSA, and a few of my close friends. Telegrams were there, too, from the Sprouls and the Kerrs. One of the touching gifts was a large and handsome Imari bowl from CASSA for my duties in the university had had little to do with the high schools except in the articulation conferences. I give this roll call of institutions represented at the dinner to illustrate the goodwill that accompanies our mutual help toward proper coordination.

Bird: The scroll was the gift of everybody. Frank Kidner read a translation of the Chinese poem by the Lesser Tu which appears on the scroll and celebrates man's kinship with nature. The dinner adjourned in a warm and happy mood which we all shared.

A few days later Dr. Harry Wellman, vice-president of the university (later president) and a great personal favorite, brought me the nice little gold pin that acknowledges ten years of service at the University of California.

Since my retirement I have been granted two university honors which assure me that the innocent do have guardian angels. I was elected an alumna member of Alpha of California, Phi Beta Kappa, in 1975 and made a Berkeley Fellow of the university, Berkeley in 1976.

RS: Would you tell about becoming a Berkeley Fellow?

Bird: The plan was first proposed by Chancellor Roger Heyns on the one hundredth birthday of the university in 1968. The number of Berkeley Fellows was therefore proposed to be a constant one hundred. The honor is conferred in recognition of "distinguished service" (usually in one's own special field) which also reflects credit on the university. When I asked Mrs. Sproul if she had anything to do with my selection, she replied, "No, but I wouldn't have opposed it."

RS: I'm sure that such an honor was deeply gratifying to you.

Bird: Yes, and pleasure and--how shall I say it?--the recurring question inside of me that asks, "How could such an honor have ever come to me?"

Ida Sproul

RS: Ida Sproul, whom you have just mentioned, has continued to be a good friend of yours, hasn't she?

Bird: I'd like to give my thoughts about Ida Sproul who, as President Sproul's wife, helped insure that those values of unity, devotion, and grace should ever characterize the University of California. She is now at mid-eighty, yet her sparkle is as bright as it ever was. She thinks of the university as almost another part of her family. All her life during Bob's tenure as president, she was a sort of extra vice-president. She helped in ways that were sometimes difficult since they lived half of the academic year on the Los Angeles campus and half in Berkeley. I don't mean just the physical aspects.

Bird: While at Los Angeles she did all sorts of things for the faculty there and also kept the Sprouls' relationship close with the faculties at Berkeley, Davis, and the San Francisco Medical Center. While in residence at Berkeley, she also held close the faculties and friends on the campuses in the south. The entertaining she did could scarcely be measured because it was almost continuous; yet she was bringing up three children, all of whom are as bright and charming as they can be. Nobody is selfish, and nobody is cocky. It's wonderful! And it extends now to the grandchildren.

RS: Would you like to talk about how your friendship with Mrs. Sproul developed?

Bird: I think ever since Dr. Sproul became president. They stopped off in Bakersfield occasionally en route to or from Los Angeles. I usually had breakfast or lunch with them. I learned what a quick mind she had and her delightful amusing way of not assuming it was so. She often offered a comment with a kind of half-smile as if to say, "I'm not supposed to know much about this, but...", and then issue a very astute statement. She has a delicious sense of humor.

Since 1950 when I first came to the university, our acquaintance has ripened into friendship. I have learned that she is the most companionable and staunchest of friends.

Offers of Employment

RS: I understand that you received other offers of employment after you retired. Would you tell about them?

Bird: Before I left Bakersfield I had received a letter from a college in Boston with a winter campus in Florida asking if I would be a candidate for the presidency. Could it have been Rollins College? I'm no longer sure. At any rate I sent regrets. I also wrote to the professor at Stanford who had proposed my name acknowledging the honor he had done me. I am far from certain I would have been elected; but he seemed certain that I would be.

RS: Did you have other offers after you came to the university?

Bird: Yes, and just let me mention one briefly. A heart warming offer came from Dr. Albert Graves of Los Angeles State College and University to help develop a curriculum leading to a credential in junior college administration. Another came from Dr. Remsen Bird of the board of the Monterey Language Institute. A third came

Bird: from a publishing house to evaluate manuscripts for textbooks for junior colleges. I might add that the salaries offered in each of these cases were considerably higher than I was receiving at the university.

RS: Were you tempted by any of these?

Bird: Momentarily by the salaries, but really, no. I wanted very much to do something for my family and a little something for myself that I had had no time to do throughout most of my working life. I wanted to travel into the sun and into the sunset, and I wanted to do something lasting for my nieces and nephews and their children.

Two Stories for Children

Bird: In the late fifties I had written a story for the youngest members of the family, the great-nieces and great-nephews. It was called A Barrel of Perfection, and it honored fine wine and introduced the children to a legend about the young Dionysus. Now in 1961 I undertook to write a second story for them which I called The Unicorn's Tale. Although addressed to the children and full of animals, a royal court, and magic, they were written primarily for their parents. I hoped to influence them a little because The Unicorn's Tale centered on the idea of helping to develop the imagination and The Barrel of Perfection celebrated fine wine.

RS: Where are they now?

Bird: If they have been kept, my nieces and nephews have theirs. I have kept my own copies.

X PEOPLE, PLACES, AND PROJECTS

Bay Area Family and Friends

RS: Did you find after your retirement more time to be with Bay Area family and friends?

Bird: Yes, and it gave me an opportunity to be closer to more members of my own family than I had had since the thirties. In truth, this was a major influence in my decision to accept President Sproul's invitation to come to the university. My brother, William (Bill) and his wife, Louise, lived in San Francisco not far from Park Merced. During our childhood and youth Bill and I had been the closest of companions. He was by nature a gentle, affectionate, and generous person. It meant a great deal to my mother to have him in the home after my father's death in Salt Lake City. Louise had a matching happy temperament and a desire to perform kind acts for Bill's family by a first wife who had died: his son, Clark Bird and daughter-in-law, Alice, and their son, Gary.

My eldest brother, Harold, moved to San Francisco late in the fifties. It was his attendance at the University of California in the early part of the twentieth century that had made me wish to choose it for myself. I knew he would come to the Bay Area when I expected to retire because his wife was not living, and he had no children. We had expected to establish a home for the two of us.

He was a very dear person, full of wit, and a marvelous raconteur. He had the type of sensitive hearing that made him adept at imitating almost any dialect. We had many evenings of laughter when, while in a semiserious discussion of some matter of national or local interest, he would suddenly utter a string of five or six letter English words in delicious German dialect and then credit Immanuel Kant. His favorite dialect was Irish, and from this he acquired the nickname "Dooley" for life. To our great sorrow this well-loved man died February 28, 1961 at his brother Bill's home.

RS: What a sorrow that must have been. Your niece, Virginia, Mrs. Easton Rothwell, was in the area then, wasn't she?

Bird: Her being in the area was a major influence in my decision to come to Berkeley. Her mother was my eldest sister, Fannie Canby Bird (Mrs. Edward B. Sterling). I adored my sister. My earliest memories from ages two to four are more clear and full of her than of my parents. She was thoughtful of me and very loving, and such a merry person always. I grew up knowing well her friends (all precursors of Junior Leaguers) in their little club, and I hoped I might be "that kind of person" when I grew up. I think I rarely imitated my peers. Nor did my closest friends. We imitated our older sisters. I imitated Fannie.

For several years after her marriage to Edward B. Sterling, she lived in Oregon. Even when the Sterlings moved to southern California, I saw them only on my vacations. However, this was often enough that Virginia Sterling and I grew close together. She was a graduate of the University of Oregon where she had met Easton Rothwell who was a graduate student there. His alma mater had been Reed College. They were married in 1932. After completion of his doctorate at Stanford University in 1939 and a short stint as a professor of history at Reed College and a longer stint with the Department of State in Washington, D.C., Easton accepted an appointment as vice-chairman of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace in 1947 and as director in 1952. In 1959 he became president of Mills College in Oakland, California. All this was wonderful for me for now in the fifties we were less than two hours apart.

Porter and Edna Garnett

RS: You also had some friendships that drew you to the Bay Area, didn't you?

Bird: Yes, one friendship did. No one in my family and no friend wrote to urge me to accept President Sproul's invitation to come to the university. They did not know I had had such an invitation until after I had accepted it.

However, I think my love for Edna and Porter Garnett would have drawn me here without the powerful desire to be near my family. The Garnetts had retired from Carnegie Institute of Technology and established their home on the Foote Ranch which Edna's father had pioneered.

Bird: That is Knight's Valley, Sonoma County, California (State Route #29 passes the property a few miles beyond Calistoga). Since 1935 I had spent a month with them during most of my summers and often a few days at Christmas and Easter. I yearned to be with them as much as possible before our time ran out.

RS: I know you have established a Porter Garnett archive in the Bancroft Library.

Bird: Mr. Garnett died shortly after celebrating his eightieth birthday on March 12, 1951. He left his papers and the books he had written and/or printed to me. I proposed to Edna that I arrange to establish an archive in his name in the Bancroft Library. Before her death in 1952, this was done. I then undertook to add to the archive the letters he had written to all those persons whose names I found in his address book. I knew many of them personally. The response was remarkable in that more than half the persons to whom I wrote had saved his letters over the years.

RS: That says something about the quality of those letters.

Speaking of Porter Garnett, I'd like to hear much more about him and Edna. For instance, what did they look like when you first met them?

Bird: Well, if you were to meet them when they were together, the first thing that would strike you would be Edna Garnett's beauty and grace. You would scarcely see him for a moment, so taken would you be by the radiance of her smile. When you did turn to Porter Garnett, you felt you were also rewarded; for he was a man possessing many of the characteristics, physical and social, that we associate with aristocratic people: graciousness, breeding. I use the term "aristo" in its root meaning of "best". One senses this at once.

Bird: When I first knew them, starting in 1915, he was a small slender man, impeccably dressed, and carrying a cane (part of his costume). His brown hair, thick and curly, was already salted with white. He was forty-four.

Edna, who was ten years younger than he, was tall--about five feet eight inches and a fraction over. I was half his age then. She was dark and radiant, as I have said. Let me add a little more about her that will reveal more things about her as a person.

She developed in me a much deeper awareness of the natural world than I would have had had I not known her. She loved every bit of the earth that surrounded her. She would walk all over the Foote Ranch (Mallacomes) where she had been born. There was a little pinery on their land, and she would walk between the trees. She would call at the homes of her brothers, which were also on the ranch, and exchange daily reflections. Her companions were her cockers who loved her deliriously, and she them.

RS: Did she share in Mr. Garnett's artistic interests?

Bird: Indeed yes. I have so stressed her love of the natural world that I have not said that she was highly intellectual and a person of true urbanity. While not sharing Porter's ability in the arts or in printing, she had an unusually sensitive understanding of what he was doing, of what was motivating him.

She was devoted to him in such a way that she gave to him constantly without any seeming effort--just so easily, so simply and lovingly. The most attractive thing about these two friends to me was their relationship with one another. They were truly two in one: one in mutual love; two in individual personalities.

Edna seemed to have innate taste: her clothes, her home, her reading. She was an excellent and sophisticated cook. She was of a musical bent and had a lovely voice. The Garnett home in Berkeley and its contents including her lovely old square piano were totally destroyed in the Berkeley fire of 1923. She told me she grieved over the piano.

As you know I visited them often on the Foote Ranch. Often she and I would lie down on the lawn and look up at the sky and see maybe a hawk soaring or maybe seeds blowing. All manner of movement was in the air, and wisps of delicate things, frail looking as a torn spider web, were part of it. I began to have a fresh happiness in these tiny constant parts of the universe.

Now Porter's attitude--he always described it himself by quoting Dorothy Parker, "If you're going to the country, kick a tree for me." [Laughter] Well, he pretended to be so, and yet he had been a vigorous gardener in Berkeley, Pittsburgh, and now on the ranch.

In fair weather on my visits we three spent most of our daylight hours in the garden whose seemliness and privacy he and Edna had created. And here we sometimes read to one another an essay or short story of Belloc or Beerbohm or Daudet, men with a light touch and writing dappled with humor. Usually, however, we just talked, and Porter revealed how attuned he was to the quiet beauty of this immediate world of nature which had had its pleasant shaping, in part, by the mind and hand of himself and Edna.

RS: Can you tell us some of the things you talked about?

Bird: Well, to use the always mispronounced word of a handyman I once knew, "the whole ga-mutt." Sometimes it was speculative talk; sometimes, exploratory. Or it might be commenting on people or issues in the news. Edna enjoyed speculative talk the least, so she and the little dogs often went to one of the other Foote houses on the ranch for a game of bridge to let Porter and me have this kind of fun.



Grace Bird in the garden
of 207 Oleander - 1941



Grace Bird in Costume for
Porter Garnett's spoof in
her honor (see pp.145-147)

RS: Would you tell about Mr. Garnett as a fine printer?

Bird: Yes, indeed, but before we leave these more personal aspects of the Garnetts and their friends, I should like to report an experience illustrating how their closest friends felt about them. One day when Elizabeth Sellers and I were driving to the Foote Ranch to visit them, I had reached the point where the Old Bale Mill is on the road up the Napa Valley. I said to Elizabeth (Lib), "Is anything special happening to you right now?" Her reply was, "What do you mean?" My answer, "I can't wait to bridge the gap between where we are and the ranch now that we are this near. My spirit is out there ahead of us." Her reply, "I felt it as soon as I saw the mountain top [Mt. St. Helena]. Didn't you know my spirit is running with yours?"

Mr. Garnett was doing things in the printing world before I moved to Bakersfield. He was with H.S. Crocker Co. His interest, however, was not commercial printing but fine printing. He could draw, paint, and design. He had also been a professional writer in his young days. He had recently turned to "the art preservative of all the arts." At the beginning of 1922 he was appointed to the faculty of the Carnegie Institute of Technology (Now Carnegie-Mellon University) where he founded The Laboratory Press, the only program in the country for the teaching of fine printing. The literary excerpts he had chosen for the students to print were in themselves an education. He is recognized in Europe and the Americas as a master printer. After his retirement he and Mrs. Garnett established their California home in Knight's Valley, Sonoma County on the ranch where Edna had been born.

RS: After he retired, what form did his talent take?

Bird: He adopted wood engraving as a hobby. It is the nearest thing to fine printing one can practice. He carved panels to honor and please his friends, chiefly. He did two panels for the Bohemian Club. One honors Will Irwin with a selection from Mr. Irwin's Grove play, The Hamadryads which Mr. Garnett had directed. The other panel carries the "Summons to the Grove" for his own Grove play, The Green Knight. Photographs of the carvings are in the Garnett archive and I have given my larger carving to it.

Wood engraving was his final hobby; but he had a life long avocation in spoofing.

RS: I wonder if the spoof wasn't an expression of the unique quality of life the Garnett circle shared. Please tell what a spoof is.

Bird: As practiced by Mr. Garnett but without now using his definition, a spoof's aim is to give pleasure to the person it honors in a surprise form. Underneath it all is a real love of people.

RS: How did the idea of the spoof originate? Did Porter Garnett invent it?

Bird: Only in the form and for the purpose he assigned to it. I believe the word itself as used to mean deceive, sleight of hand, or what have goes back to the middle of the 19th Century in England. Mr. Garnett changed its meaning to surprise, actually to benign surprise. He explained that the true spoof brings an accretion of pleasure to the honoree (spoofee) and at no time dismays him. In an elaborate spoof, there may be a continuous rise in surprises and pleasure for the spoofee, but there may also be minor spoofs involving only a few people and a small but delightful surprise at the climax.

RS: I understand you took part in many spoofs.

Bird: Over the years, probably a score: some honoring P.G.; several designed by P.G., and a few maverick spoofs of my own.

Let me illustrate. I was staying a week with the Garnetts. After Porter left one morning after breakfast where food had been a topic of discussion, Edna and I began talking about food. Presently we found ourselves on the subject of Porter's prejudices against certain foods. This led to a discussion of prejudices in general and ours in particular. Suddenly a merry idea struck me. Wouldn't it be fun to surprise P.G. with a sort of reverse spoof celebrating his prejudices instead of his talents. Edna agreed at once with laughter. I blocked out a scenario and Edna invited our conspirators, Hazel and Ian Armstrong, Bob and Louise Ogden, Edna's sister Ellie, and a friend of mine, Maraquita de Laguna, whom they had met and liked very much.

We planned to hold the affair the following evening when P.G. came home from San Francisco with Ian. And we were ready. When he entered the house from the garden entrance, he walked into a living room where all the furniture had been rearranged--a prejudice of his since he thought there was always one most nearly right place in relation to windows, doors, fireplace and such. In the north-east end of the room was a box with a chair in it and a program on the seat. The "box" was an actual large carton for shipping Ivory Soap and was labeled Solid Ivory. In the south-east end was a telephone desk, at which sat a replica of P.G. in a tuxedo talking at length on the telephone about the technique of outdoor productions. A light in the hall beyond the room went on and there stood an impersonator of William Dallam Armes, director of the Greek Theater making an announcement from the stage prior to Bernhardt's entrance (prejudice against this kind of limelighting).

Bird: A dancer appeared in costume carrying a round porcelain platter of white pudding and dancing as if it were ambrosia (prejudice against desserts made with suet or cornstarch). An impersonator of Katherine Jewell Everts as a holier than thou dramatic reader (prejudice against false sweetness and light). Our dancer appears as a goldfish dancing with movements of a fish gliding in water and moving its gills (prejudice against art imitating nature). Nature trailing vines of grape leaves and honeysuckle moves across the room with a wheelbarrow holding the well-fed Spirit of Bohemia with her pillow stuffed body draped in scarfs of silk and velvet (prejudice against substituting mammon for art).

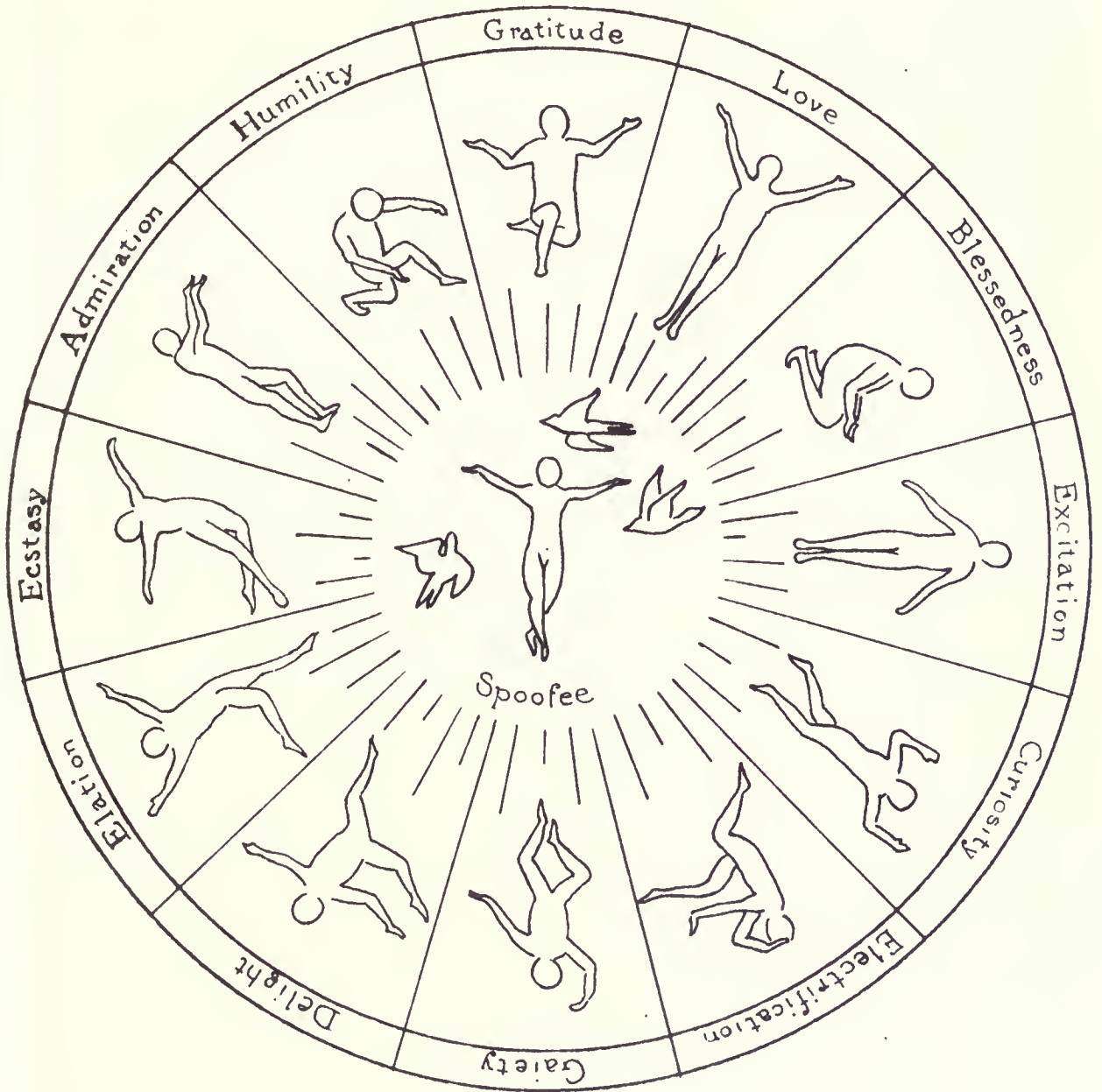
And at the end Edna herself appeared in a long flowing white robe with a sword hanging from her shoulder (a Garnett family heirloom) and an enormous headdress made into a ball and crushed into an interesting state. She represented the Spirit of Bruce Porter than whom there was probably no one in San Francisco who stood for true culture more than he. She made an extemporaneous speech that capped the whole evening (prejudice for the spirit represented by Bruce Porter).

Well you can see what fun this all was and what willing, joyful, instant participation came from our friends. P.G. himself was so entertained by it he made a drawing of each episode around a circle in the middle where sat the cardboard P.G. talking on the telephone. He gave it to me. I have placed it in the Garnett archive in the Bancroft Library.

May I close this section on the Garnetts by telling an incident that occurred in February 1951 shortly before his death? I was once again with them for an overnight stay. We had had a quiet day because Porter was not feeling well. His heart was wearing out. About midnight Edna came to my room and roused me.

"Come quickly and help me lift Bunny (her pet name for him). He's having difficulty breathing."

We ran to him and lifted him into a big chair and wrapped warm blankets around him. He was gasping and pale. Responding to Edna's telephone call, Dr. McGraine instructed Edna to give P.G. as many sips of bourbon as he could manage to swallow while he, the doctor, was en route from Calistoga eight miles away. Following this advice brought enough stimulus to heart and lungs to ease the breathing. Even before Dr. McGraine arrived, this short-of-breath man who had been motioning us to stand back to give him wide access to air now motioned us to come closer to hear him tell us something. What he said, panting the while, was "Gaspard de la Nuit," and then repeated it. At our astonished looks, he added, still between gasps, "Nineteenth...century...prose poems....greatly influenced (extensive pause)....Baudelaire."



Circle of Spooof Emotions

To PG From a Non-Poet

1915

Matisse, Cezanne, Picasso, Dégas!
Shout for the libido,
Hoist high the fano,
Jazz up the dithyramb and twang the lute .
Gundja! Gundja!
Braque à Braque, toot-toot.
Now with the occult we have downed the roughnex,
Everybody lined up to exercise his complex,
Trapezoidal portraits hanging in relief,
Kabbages, Kabbages, Kabéans, and Ka-beef.
All hail Dada, Tim Clapp, and Epstein!
All hail H. D., Guardi, and Einstein!
Look at classic Isadora dance the Grecian flip-flop.
Hark to Alfred Kreymbourg read his poetry of chip-chop,
Sculpt with a crowbar,
Paint with a broom,
Clive Bell! Oh hell! Boomalay, Boom!

G. B.

Bird: The Dixons checked the proper bracket and entered the proper date by hand and posted the announcement.

The Garnetts in Pittsburgh received one, and Mr. Garnett replied in a way that no one else in all the world, I think, would have thought to reply. He printed a long, fairly narrow sheet which read:

The B O Y born
to Dorothea and Maynard Dixon
on May 15, 1925 has been named
[] _____ [] _____
[] _____ [] _____

There followed a double column of thirty male names each with a bracket in front of every name. The names ranged from the Italian "Ugolino" through fifty-nine others ending with a sixty-first bracket and blank space to enter the proper name if none offered fit.

Xavier Martinez

RS: I believe you have an incident to tell about Xavier Martinez?

Bird: I was a guest in their home one evening for supper. The Garnetts were there, and I think that was why Dorothy Bent (later Mrs. Clayton Lane) and I were invited to be there. Because neither of us had ever seen Marty "perform" some lines of verse he had learned when he was studying in Paris, he was asked to demonstrate. The poem, itself, is amusing, but its delivery by X.M. is what lifts it into the realm of art. He recites it over and over and over again with rising inflections, diminishing inflections, anger, fear, horror; plaintively, piteously, grievously. He moved about a good deal depending on which emotion had him in its grip and finally lay on the floor barely able to whisper. It was a great thing to see, and I feel sure there were not many of the Martinez friends in those happy, bright days who had not enjoyed just such a scene. Here is the poem with my apologies for my French nasals:

"Quand j'y songe
Mon coeur s'allonge
Comme un eponge
Que l'on plonge
Dans un gouffre
Plein de souffre
Et je souffre
Des torments
Qui sont si grands
Que
Quand j'y songe..." etc. to exhaustion.

Bird: I did not know the Martinezes very well. I found them hospitable and merry people devoted to one another and their daughter, Micaela, who was then only a child. I understand she has done an oral history about her parents, and it may recount better than I have this jolly performance of her father.

Bruce Porter

RS: There is one other person I want to ask you about; that's Bruce Porter. Did you know him? What are your recollections of him?

Bird: I did not know him very well, but his courtesy is so warm and natural, I always felt I knew him. I was aware that I was in the presence of a very fine and subtle mind, that I was in the presence of a man so steeped in the field of the arts that they were a part of him.

RS: He is famed as the man who married William James' daughter, but not too much else is generally known about him. Any comment you make would be helpful.

Bird: I think, on the contrary, that he was a man of many talents and was recognized as one of the bright new lights in the far west's literary and artistic sky. He was one of the original founders of Les Jeunes and The Lark. He was a designer in stained glass and a painter of murals.

RS: How would you describe Bruce Porter's manner? Was he serious? Elegant?

Bird: I think he did not give the sense of elegance except the elegance that comes from within. What I had was a feeling of somebody who was very gentle, very kind. Intelligent, wise, and compassionate, he seemed possessed of nobility.

RS: That's a very nice portrait of the man. Is there a Bruce Porter archive in the Bancroft?

Bird: I think not. Dr. James Hart asked me if I thought I knew Mr. Porter well enough to ask that his papers be given to the Bancroft. B.R.'s reply to my note to him was that he thought he had no papers left. I think there are probably some filed under headings with which he was associated such as stained glass, for example.

Witter Bynner and His Poetry Students

RS: I know you became a friend of the poet, Witter Bynner, and some of his students when he taught a class in poetry on the Berkeley campus at the time of World War I. Can you tell us how it came about that Mr. Bynner was teaching on the Berkeley campus?

Bird: He had been invited to come to teach English and speech to the young men enrolled in officer candidate programs. It was 1918, and the United States was already engaged in the war in Europe.

After the Armistice November 1918, the war training classes were discontinued, but the university invited Mr. Bynner to remain for the spring to teach poetry. I was living in Bakersfield at the time.

RS: How did you meet Mr. Bynner?

Bird: When an educational conference brought me to the Berkeley campus I usually stayed at the Garnetts' home. It was thus I met Mr. Bynner ("Hal" to his friends) during the early fall. Soon I had a note from him with this four line bit of doggerel:

"Must it be Miss and Witter?
 Since Garnetts are our pal,
 Mightn't it be fitter
 If we were Grace and Hal?"

So we became such henceforth. Although we seldom saw one another and seldom wrote, our friendship persisted. I had a note from him not very long before his death in 1968 when he was almost blind. That was fifty years after we first had met. Over the years he sent me his printed poems, and I had been able to give him some help when he disposed of half a section of land in Kern County from his mother's estate.

I think I have told you earlier that his biography is now being written by James Kraft of Washington, D.C. It must be a happy task for Hal must have had a hundred devoted friends, men and women, who bore him affection. Many made pilgrimages to see him in his home in Santa Fe especially in his last several years. David Greenwood often wrote of "Hal's unending flow of visitors".

But let us return to the students of poetry in that class of almost sixty years ago. There were a few more than twenty, I think. I never saw them as a class, but I knew a few of them personally. Two are still my well-loved friends.

RS: Who are they?

Bird: Hildegarde Plummer (Mrs. Frederick Monhoff) and Clarence David Greenwood (nickname "Click"). Both were and are writers. Hildegarde became a poet professionally; Click, a writer in prose although he has also written some poems of true worth.

Click and Fred Monhoff were roommates in the university when I first knew them, and Hildegarde was in attendance also, and I began to think of them as a youthful triad in the Cornett circle. Having been a part of the Porter Cornett spoof honoring Walter Byner, they had been an enigma of the particular sort of benign surprise, they, themselves, became thereby personal friends.

Well, I have indicated that Hildegarde married Fred Monhoff. After the Berkeley fire of 1922 the Plammers and Fred moved south where they lived until moving to our wine country in the Napa Valley north of St. Helena.

RS: What was Fred Monhoff's profession?

Bird: He was an architect and artist. Chiefly an etcher and engraver. As with other friends who did not live in the same city as I, our friendship was maintained through correspondence until they moved north near enough for us to visit. I was very fond of them both.

RS: Did they continue with their professions?

Bird: In a way, as all creative people do even after they retire from formal commitments. Early in 1971, they sent me a Christmas gift to their friends and a few libraries a handsomely printed selection of poems written by Hildegarde with engravings done by Fred at the time, for the most part, of their first writing. The book In Native Light reveals the unusual talent of both poet and engraver. Here, turn the leaves while I speak my admiration of these "end-through-mind" friends. I believe Hildegarde to be an authentic poet. I believe she responds with inner truth and lyricism to her world that reaffirms what is best in our own response. Too much innocuous. Don't you believe it.

I had the great honor of quoting her "Sonnet: 1933" on my Christmas card to my friends in 1974. Their responses would have delighted any true poet.

RS: The third person you referred to was David Greenwood. Can we turn to him now?

Bird: After his graduation from the university he married Helen Gentry; who moved with ease into the Cornett circle. I was now back in Eurekafield and only shared in the merry events of those days by long distance telephone. Whether under Mr. Cornett's influence or not I do not know, but Helen began to work at fine printing at the

Bird: Hildegarde Flanner (Mrs. Frederick Monhoff) and Clarence David Greenhood (nickname "Clink"). Both were and are writers. Hildegarde became a poet professionally; Clink, a writer in prose although he has also written some poems of true worth.

Clink and Fred Monhoff were roommates in the university when I first knew them, and Hildegarde was in attendance also, and I began to think of them as a youthful trinity in the Garnett circle. Having been a part of the Porter Garnett spoof honoring Witter Bynner, they had been so enamored of the particular art form of benign surprise, they, themselves, became charming practitioners.

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RS: The third person you referred to was David Greenhood. Can we turn to him now?

Bird: After his graduation from the university he married Helen Gentry; who moved with ease into the Garnett circle. I was now back in Bakersfield and only shared in the merry events of those days by long distance telephone. Whether under Mr. Garnett's influence or not I do not know, but Helen began to work at fine printing at the

Bird: Grabhorns' press and a little later founded her own Helen Gentry Press. Meantime David ("Clink") began to write for publication and to do editing. Although specific dates are difficult to recall, David and Helen went to Pittsburgh when he received an appointment to teach English at Carnegie Institute of Technology about 1925 or 1926. It was from there that they went to New York in the thirties and established themselves with the publishing firm called Holiday House. Helen designed and printed books. David did the editing and general management. Meantime David had had one novel published called The Hill and now was finishing a second titled Love in Dishevelment. On one of my trips to New York I visited their press, and on others we spent dinners and evenings together. On one or two occasions Dr. Clapp was with us. David's third book, The Writer Looks at His Work is a modest masterpiece.

The Greenhoods had established a summer home in Santa Fe, New Mexico to which they flew in all haste from New York when their business permitted. Since their retirement, it is their permanent home. I think Porter Garnett felt closer over the years to David (whom he always called Clink) than to any of the group from Bynner's old poetry class.

I think I know some of the contributing factors; Clink's high and sensitive intelligence, his unshakeable integrity, his firm loyalty, and his talent and charm as a letter writer and essayist. Clink, by the way, looks like Yehudi Menuhin and has the same courteous manner.

[I asked Miss Bird to add to her interview any material she would like to include on her friends and family, her travels and other activities of her retirement that we had not covered in the interview sessions. Miss Bird wrote the following in interview form. RS.]

Other Bay Area Friends

RS: To return to the fifties and sixties, I'd like to hear about your other Bay Area friends.

Bird: Dr. and Mrs. Robert T. Legge had been my dear friends since my undergraduate days on the Berkeley campus. I had often been their house guest at their home on Roble Road so full of handsome Chinese rugs, lacquer, china, gold carvings, and with downstairs and upstairs living rooms bulging with books. My little room was truly a nest in the sky for the ground fell away to a ravine, and the tree tops outside the window were homes to families of finches and warblers.

Bird: The best part of our long friendship was the companionship of people whom one admired and with whom one was sympathetic. Our many, many evenings of exploring ideas together and sharing amusing experiences were nourishment, indeed. Both have since died.

Transplanted friends from my Bakersfield days were here to renew our earlier days of friendship, Mr. and Mrs. Vergne J. Moore and their daughter, Charlotte Anne, and Dr. and Mrs. Herman A. Spindt. The two households were hospitality personified in their treatment of me. I was a frequent dinner guest at each home, and on the Fourth of July, we all gathered together at the Moores. It was as if we had never been apart. Of the group only Charlotte Anne and I are still living. We are closer than ever even though her home is in Santa Rosa.

Let me mention two other couples. I first met one of them in the forties but my friendship for them ripened fully. These were Vivien and Leonid Tichvinsky. Leonid was a professor in the College of Engineering on the Berkeley campus of the University of California; Vivien was the godchild of my Florentine friend, Margherita Langer-Chiari. We did many things together, sometimes alone and sometimes with Mr. and Mrs. Henry K. Norton. I always celebrated Russian Easter at the parties given by the Tichvinskys. Vivien died in Germany in 1963 while Leonid was director of the University of California program at the University of Gottingen. A few years later he married the widow of Clarence King (Mrs. Marian King) in St. Louis. The Kings and Tichvinskys had been friends when Leonid and Vivien lived in St. Louis. I have added these sentences because Marian Tichvinsky has become as dear to me as Vivien had been.

Dr. Portia Bell Hume and her husband Samuel were the other couple I would include. I had known Dr. Hume only after her marriage to Samuel J. Hume in 1928 and their building of the castle-cloister on the hill. I had met Mr. Hume in 1915 when he came to California to direct a masque written by his friend, Sheldon Cheney, and funded by the Kellogg Foundation of Michigan. Both men were Californians and graduates of the University of California. As professional men of the theater, they had founded Theater Arts Magazine, and now they were collaborating again in a production in the new Oakland Auditorium. I knew neither man.

RS: How did you come to meet them?

Bird: When it came time to select a cast for the speaking parts and neither man knew who the college players were, Porter Garnett suggested that I probably knew most of them. Thus I was drawn into a conference, and my campus colleagues were drawn into the masque.

I don't remember the official title of the masque but it was a masque in praise of good health. The evil forces were War and

Bird: Disease and Famine. The good forces were, as I recall, Beauty, Education, the humanities as represented by Art, Music, Literature, and Recreation.

I remember who a few of the players were. War was played by Richard Chamberlain, not long ago District Attorney in Oakland. Disease was played by Will Henry, brother of Dr. Aurelia Henry Reinhardt. Doris McEntire, a successful teacher of drama, was Literature, I, myself, was asked to play the Neglected Child.

I saw Mr. Hume a number of times after that, but we then rarely met until the thirties, perhaps four or so years after his marriage to Dr. Hume. I think I first met her when she was studying medicine at the University of California Medical Center.

Portia Bell Hume is a very interesting person. She attended the University of California, Berkeley, majored in philosophy, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and graduated cum laude. She was an accomplished pianist who had become more interested, however, in the dance. She went to Europe to study, but her interest in the medium through which the dance was expressed became greater than the dance, and she turned to sculpture. She studied with Antoine Bourdelle.

It was in Europe that she and Mr. Hume were married. Mr. and Mrs. Sproul were at the marriage with Mr. Sproul "giving the bride away." The castle home the Humes then built for themselves included a sculptor's studio for Portia and a mezzanine for a music room.

It is my guess, but not my knowledge, that she went on to study medicine because Portia's rich and varied mind that had become interested in the human body now wanted to know the motivations that controlled the use made of that body. I think she had enjoyed all the things she had done in preparation for this choice. In 1938 she had finished her M.D. and her specialization in psychiatry.

A group of us cooperated with Porter Garnett in presenting a spoof as the garniture of a celebration of her M.D. and specialization (psychiatry) on her birthday in 1938, a merry seal to our friendship.

I was living in Bakersfield then and saw the Humes only at intervals until after I moved to Berkeley. In the sixties a group of us began observing Christmas eve together at the Humes' home, "The Cloisters." It became a tradition, and before long we found ourselves celebrating our birthdays together. We have continued both practices although no one of our original six men is now living.

Travel to the Orient

Bird: My brother Harold had died February 27, 1961, shortly after the death of my nephew, Porter Bird Sinclair, on January 11, 1961. These two men were not only my relatives; they were also what one means when one says "my best friends." I felt the need to know and love my other nephews and nieces who now had children for me to meet and love. So, with my second children's story finished I set out for the Far East March 1962. That direction would permit me to see my nephews: Scott Sterling, and his family in Hawaii, Scott-Elliott Bird, Jr. and his family in Manila, and William Harold Bird II and his family in Manila and Bangkok; Commander David W. Sinclair and his family in Tokyo. Moreover, it had been agreed before I left that the widow of my nephew, Porter Bird Sinclair, would join me for part of our time together in Japan. She was Margaret "Jill" Sinclair, and we spent about three weeks doing the things travellers do in that clean, green, flowered, magical land such as visiting the most famous of the shrines of which there are surely as many as cathedrals in France or palazzi in Italy; riding the fast on-time trains through country where the cultivation itself reflects the hand of an artist; going down the inland sea where we bowed our heads at Hiroshima and debarked at Beppu. We stayed at the lovely Japanese inn named for the emperor's own family, Showa Inn; visiting (and shopping) in cities such as Osaka, Kyoto, Fujiya; touring the art galleries; staying at least one night at Fuji View Hotel for an early morning view of that beautiful sloping Fujiyama still wearing winter's dress in March. And so much more!

I think speaking of Jill Sinclair joining me diverted my plane. My first, and almost my last, stop on the trip was Hawaii where Scott Bird Sterling and his family lived in Wahiawa, Oahu. What did I find? Scott, a professional soil conservationist; his then wife, Helen, a hospitable, warm-hearted, relaxed and pretty woman; their attractive teenage daughter and son, Susan and Steven. Although I stayed at a hotel in Honolulu, most of my days were spent with Scott Sterling driving about Oahu. There had been a joyful surprise when my plane arrived in Honolulu.

Well, I wasn't surprised to have the Sterlings meet me with orchid leis; but standing beside them to greet me with a handsome lei of red carnations was Anna Furtado Kahanamoku (Mrs. Sargent Kahanamoku) who had graduated from Bakersfield College about 1928 before graduating later from the University of Hawaii. She was serving in the legislature and expressed a wish to show me the state capitol. Although I am unsure of the sequence of dates, Anna also served as president of the State Board of Education. It was an extra treat to see her again with her youthful promise and good looks now ripened into leadership and rare beauty.

Bird: I also visited Kuaii where I stayed at the Coco Palms Hotel and loved its slightly florid show of being native Hawaiian. Then back to Honolulu for the Sterlings to put me on the plane for Manila to meet my brother Scott Elliot Bird's two sons and their families: the Scott-Elliot Bird, Jrs., and the William Harold Birds II.

At the Manila airport I walked into the arms of Ellsy Bird (Mrs. Scott Bird, Jr.), Ruth Bird (Mrs. William H. Bird II) and the Scott Bird, Jr., children Robin, Sean, and Scott III. It was very hot and humid but motor cars and houses were airconditioned.

When we reached the cool Scott Bird home, an unusual gift was awaiting me. Spread out on my bed was the material for a light blue embroidered dress and a note telling me my measurements would be taken that day and the finished dress would be delivered the next day. What a miraculous gift to receive in a hot country where another cotton dress kept me fresh for outdoor luncheon at the Polo Club, for example, or dinner at the Europa. For the first time ever I identified with Cinderella!

Also, one day Ruth took me to Lake Taal Inn for luncheon. The inn is on a high bluff looking down into a large but nearly dry lake with its two volcanoes on a little island in the middle. The smaller volcano had recently been active, and it has been very active since I was there.

RS: Were either of your nephews in Manila at that time?

Bird: Not the first few days. Scott was in Hong Kong but returned the afternoon of my trip with Ruth to Lake Taal. Bill was in Laos.

After Scott came home to Manila, he took over as my host, and the next morning we set out in his plane to see some of the construction projects Bill and he had completed or now had in progress. For my part, there were some places I wanted to see because of United States involvement in two wars.

One was Cavite, the United States naval base from 1898-1941 where Admiral Dewey defeated the Spanish fleet. It was here my cousin, Marine Colonel James Thomas Bootes, then 36 years old served as provost marshall in the pacification of the Philippines after the defeat of Spain.

Another place I wished to see was Corregidor. And the whole Bataan peninsula; for Howard Jack Galbraith of Bakersfield had been my friend since his high school days in Bakersfield. As an army reserve officer when war with Japan broke out, Captain Galbraith was one of the first to go to the Philippines. He was captured when our forces surrendered our island fortress on Corregidor, and he was one of those who survived what became known as the "Death March" on

Bird: Bataan. So Scott flew over Corregidor and the road up the peninsula while I breathed thanks and gratitude to all our men who had fought there. The new road which runs fairly parallel to the old one had been built by Bill.

Scott turned the Cessna across Manila Bay to visit their current project and have luncheon with their engineer-foreman.

RS: What precisely was the business of your nephews?

Bird: Primarily the building of airfields and roads and the ground work for large installations. The project I visited was for Shell Oil Company: grounds for a refinery, a landing strip for planes; roads curving around hills for houses for Shell employees. Bill had already completed a like contract for a Standard Oil installation across the bay from Manila. The business had expanded greatly, and in 1956 it was incorporated. The office was moved from Seattle to San Francisco. This meant happiness for me since it brought my brother to San Francisco to live, and Bill and Ruth to lease an apartment to spend part of the year here, too.

Well, with all that talk about the nephews' business, we are off on a spur line again. After more happy and full days in Manila, I left for Bangkok. When I checked into my room at the Rama, a bouquet of flowers was on the dresser from the Birds, and on a table was a huge basket of native fruits from Darrell Berrigan. Mr. Berrigan had attended Bakersfield College in the thirties, and had been a United Press correspondent in Asia in World War II. He was now owner-editor of the excellent English language newspaper, The Bangkok World.

RS: You spoke of him in connection with the Sixth War Loan Drive in Bakersfield.

Bird: And now here he was welcoming me to Bangkok. A message from my nephew came with his flowers telling me that he and his Air Division chief, "Dutch" Brongersma, would be arriving from Laos in half an hour to take me to dinner and to see the Thai classical dancers. May I interrupt for a minute to tell you a little something about Mr. Brongersma. He was one of the best--possibly the best--airline pilot in that part of Asia. Our roving Ambassador Averill Harriman desired to have him as air pilot on United States missions to Southeast Asia, and Bill so assigned him.

Let us skip any travelogue of Thailand except to say that Bangkok is a great delight. The color, of course, and the architecture pointing to the sky, the tall columns standing free often topped by spires, no sense of squareness anywhere, everything circular or pointed, elegant perforated screens and gold, gold, gold. I shopped

Bird: for fresh fruit at the floating markets on Bangkok's river and for handsomely patterned cottons and rich silks in James Thompson's shop. And every day I read The Bangkok World. All the time I could, I spent with Bill or Darrell Berrigan. The fourth day Bill had to return to Laos. His secretary became my hostess, but on my last day, it was Darrell who saw me off for Cambodia. What a dear friend he had been!

Three years later, while I was in Washington, D.C., I read an account in the Post of the murder of Darrell Berrigan. He was leaving the offices of The Bangkok World for his home after making up the edition for his pressmen to run off for morning delivery. The apparent motive was robbery; for his watch and wallet were missing when he was found.

When I read of his death I recalled his smile as he saw me off for Cambodia three years earlier.

Because of feuding between Thailand and Cambodia, the only way I could cross into Cambodia was by Air Vietnam. Never had I seen even in a museum such a primitive machine as that plane. The young English student who sat beside me held a crucifix on a chain of beads all the way to Angkor and mumbled his prayers until we debarked on the air strip near L'Auberge des Temples for our visit to the complex of temples built nearly a thousand years ago. The three young Britons were gone by the next afternoon, but I remained into the fifth day. Each day was an emotional experience.

I wish I could tell you just what the mark is that Angkor Wat, the Bayon, and other temples left on me. I have thought about it many times. I think it came from the sharp contrast in the feeling I had of the perfect order and clarity of the architectural design of the buildings and their sculptured glories with the sense of desertion everywhere. How unlike Minos' palace on Crete where the presence of people living three thousand years ago is felt still. It is almost as if one could hear the queen's footsteps as she walked to her quarters from the outdoor theater. No footsteps were heard by my inner ear at Angkor, yet the great beauty of those sculptured stone temples far exceeded the beauty at Knossos. Angkor's beauty dwells with me still. The French had rescued Angkor from the forest that had held it for a thousand years. Yet you knew the forest would reclaim it unless man was watchful.

Those of us who were staying at L'Auberge des Temples directly across the road from large Angkor Wat went to our rooms every night with a picture of the temple silhouetted against a rose-colored sky caused by electrical storms. Air Cathay took me to Saigon as I waved goodbye to the white gibbon and two elephants who were permanently guests at the inn.

Bird: I spent only two days in Saigon. Hotel Caravelle was on the same square as the U.S. Embassy. When I went to dinner, there were very few women in the dining room. It was full of military officers in our uniforms and a few whose uniforms I did not recognize. However, I did recognize an investment banker from Italy at a table with a group of men. I had met him in Bangkok, and I assumed there were other investment bankers in the room. I have been told that the United States had some three thousand military advisers in South Vietnam at that time. The streets were awash with young men in uniform. Although people seemed to be going about their business as they normally did, I thought the whole mood was ominous.

When I learned foreigners were not permitted to go outside of Saigon, I hired a taxicab to take me on a tour of the city. The driver elected to start the tour at the National Palace which had been bombed and damaged the day before. From this evidence of terror, we moved to an oasis of peace, Thu View, the American library named Abraham Lincoln.

Air Cathy left Saigon for Hong Kong almost on time, but if the once popular song "Slow Boat to China" had been about an airship, it would have been about ours on that flight. We waited at Pnom Penh for an hour or more and were six hours late arriving at Hong Kong without having had food. The Ambassador Hotel met that problem for its late arrivals (one a.m.) with room service.

Without family in Hong Kong to make plans for me, I had arranged in advance for daily tours by car in Kowloon and on Hong Kong island itself. But the thing that set fire crackers exploding within me was looking across the bridge to mainland China. Since I had been a little girl, I had loved things Chinese. My father had brought me once a brightly decorated Chinese chest looking like a small steamer trunk. This enlivened my affection for things Chinese and for the Chinese people. Thus when I looked across the border, it was not Communist China or the Chinese Republic or a Chinese empire but just China. I felt near to Li Po, Confucius, Tu Fu and persons whose philosophy I shared just as I felt so with Thomas Jefferson when at Monticello.

After four days, I departed for Tokyo and my Sinclair family; Commander David W. Sinclair was the Coast Guard officer in command of our nation's Far East section of LORAN (Long Range Aid to Navigation) which guides thousands of ships and planes to exotic places. There were thirteen sub-stations scattered among the Japanese islands. His office was in Tokyo, and his home on the U.S. naval station there. He was decorated by Emperor Hirohito for the quality of his service.

RS: Was he the son of your sister?

Bird: He was one of two sons born to my sister, Laura Bird Sinclair and her husband, Frederick William Sinclair. Neither of his parents was now living, and his brother, Porter Bird Sinclair, had just died in 1961.

RS: What had Porter Sinclair's business been?

Bird: Marine supplies with his main store in Newport Beach. Both brothers had become fascinated with recreational boating and had intensified their interest while students at the University of California, Los Angeles. Porter continued to graduation in Business Administration, but David withdrew after two years to enter the Coast Guard Academy from which he graduated as an ensign. Porter established his business in marine supplies as Newport Supply Company in Newport Beach, California. I had been close to both young men throughout their lives. I saw Porter and his wife, Margaret (Jill) and son, Roy Porter Sinclair (Jeep) several times a year, and I visited David and his wife, Mary Bond Sinclair and their four children, Christine, Karen, Terry, and Scott, at most bases to which David's duty sent him. These have included Washington, D.C., San Diego, Puerto Rica, Seattle, Long Beach, Tokyo, and San Francisco's Yerba Buena Island. His rank in San Francisco was that of captain.

Since his retirement he has established his home in San Diego, and his devotion to his wife, Mary, and the sea are often manifest as they sail their yacht, Ichiban, in California waters.

To get back to my visit to Japan, after Jill left for Newport Beach, the Tokyo Sinclairs introduced me to their crowded streets of purposeful people and rushing motor cars. Now there was time for the theater and other social events.

I saw the striking contrast between Kabuki and Noh--a contrast not alone on the stage but in the audience. Kabuki was played with a showy theatrical flair and great color to packed audiences. Noh was played in a subdued tone and colors with, however, an intensity which I caught. Every movement was highly stylized and had been so generation after generation. The small audience remained silent as if to weigh every ounce of the symbolism. Kabuki is refreshing; I was almost emotionally spent after Noh. Yet I could scarcely wait to go again. But enough of these memories of the land of the rising sun. After another week or ten days, I emplaned for Hawaii and California.

Tracing Family History

Bird: Once home, I turned to the major project I wanted to undertake for my family: the story of our common background. It was not to be genealogical alone although it would have a brief opening chapter called "The Early Birds" of whom records go back to the 13th Century. I wanted to bring alive, if I could, the members of our family from their first arrival in America. I wanted to give special attention to my grandparents (paternal and maternal) and to my own parents.

I intended to include all the living descendants of my paternal grandparents, James Thomas Bird and Elizabeth Clark Bird, and of my maternal grandparents, James W. Lapish and Hannah Settle Lapish. Thus I thought I might serve as a bridge between their past and themselves. I had limited my study to following only the direct line of descent. The last part of my plan I had never seen used before, but I believed it essential to my overall purpose.

What I wished to do was to have each of the living descendants of my grandparents (Birds and Lapishes) write their own account of their own families and, in this way, to introduce themselves to one another.

RS: How did that work out?

Bird: I thought it to be very successful. A response came from everybody. I had not guessed we had so many talented and entertaining writers among the Birds.

I distributed copies to all the living descendants of my grandparents on both sides in 1966. They were not printed but mimeographed. I prepared a second volume about the distaff side for distribution in 1971. I thought the ancestry of the women was quite as important as that of the men even though far less about them appears in any of the records.

I think it probably is the best legacy I could leave to my family since I must spin whatever legacy I leave out of my own substance.

Further Travels

Bird: I would like to tell about another trip I took to the Near East and the Greek Islands. I shall try to avoid the travelogue, but I should enjoy telling what a few places did to me. May we look first at Egypt? Some sixty years earlier I had studied the history of

Bird: architecture with John Galen Howard, dean of the School of Architecture at the University of California and architect of many of its buildings: the university library, Wheeler Hall, California Hall, and many others. He was the kind of teacher who is so fascinated by what he is teaching, the listener finds himself responding in kind. Thus when I visited the Step Pyramid built more than ~~four~~ thousand years ago, it seemed I had been there before. On my music cabinet I have a reproduction of a small bronze statue of Imhotep, the architect of the Step Pyramid, and recognized by historians as the very first architect and physician identifiable by name. The great pyramids of Cheops and Khufu were not to be built for fifty or more years. While it was sheer age that kept a place in my memory for Imhotep, it was majesty and beauty that kept the temples at Karnak and Luxor there. I hear a faint echo of Dean Howard's voice as he ranked Karnak with the Parthenon.

Classical Greece is surely part of us. Let me describe what seemed to me to be the chief difference between a classical tour of mainland Greece and the tour I took of the Greek Islands which included a stop at Ephesus via Izmir in Turkey en route to Istanbul. The difference lay for me in the exposure to places with different religious loyalties presaging our own melting pot: the palace of Minos with the sacred bull; Ephesus in Turkey with the large theater in which Paul preached and the little prison in which he wrote his epistles. Ephesus was a Roman city politically, but philosophically it was more Greek than Roman; for it was Hadrian's city. It may also have been Mary's city; for it holds in its outskirts a small house known as "Mary's House," but not yet so documented.

Then there was Rhodes with the elegant Crusaders' houses lining their own street below their Crusaders' palace-fort. Homer tells us that the three cities of Rhodes had sent forces to the Trojan War.

And there was Delos, a sort of Fort Knox of the early Greek Empire, with its handsome mosaic floors in the Jewish Center and, of course, there was Istanbul, the meeting place of East and West, which, since its early ~~Romanticism~~ until about fifty years ago, had been named Constantinople for the Christian emperor of Rome, Constantine. Visitors are always taken to see the Church of Saint Sophia built in his honor and antedating the magnificent mosques built by sultans. The beauty of the mosques and their richness do truly overwhelm one--such enormous silken rugs, such domes (large and small and smaller), such slender minarets, such light, such quiet, such balm.

I took the guided tour the first morning of my arrival in Istanbul, but I met a Turkish friend of mine, Mebrure Akand, at noon, and we took a boat trip up the Bosphorus that afternoon. What a river! We debarked at a delightful, small town rising steeply

Bird: from the flat square with the houses along the upper streets appearing to be built on top of one another as they do in Sausalito. We wandered in and out of highly individual shops making irresistible purchases. We were almost at the wall and towers which mark the place where the Bosphorus meets the Black Sea. It was a river of history. After dinner we returned by motor car to Istanbul and my ship. We met again the next morning to visit museums, galleries, the Old Town, the old Seraglio with its rooms full of treasures. Then aboard ship for the return to Athens with brief stops at Delos and Mykanos.

I think this anecdote might be interesting. I had gone by bus with a group of tourists, largely Americans, to see the ruins of Agamemnon's palace at Mycenae. There was the Lions Gate I had met in Architecture 5. We then proceeded to Old Corinth where Paul preached from the marble floor of the bema. A tablet states that a synagogue had once stood there. With history and classical literature whirling in our minds, we were offered the choice to return to Athens by boat across the Saronic Gulf to the island of Aegina. Mrs. Helen Barnes, then a teacher at Pasadena City College, and I were the only ones to choose the boat. The sea was very rough, but we learned how to let our grip on our coffee cups bounce up in the air a foot or more above the table with only slight spilling of the liquid. We were seated on the open rear deck. Suddenly the captain opened the door from the lounge and called "Look back!" In the churning wake were "not less than forty dolphins" leaping in great arcs over and over again. I am quoting the captain's estimate, not mine. Our spirits soared with the dolphins, up from the foam high, higher--curving down into the white wake. Again, up and over, one and then another, faster than sixteenth notes. The people on the boat, almost all Greeks, began calling to the dolphins and waving. We waved too. Not again would I be likely to see a more joyous display in the sea.

Let me tell of an incident of a very different sort. My hotel was the King George located on Constitution Square. The dining room was on the sixth floor with a balcony looking down on the square. Archbishop Makarios checked in from Cyprus the same day I did. That evening there was a huge demonstration before the Parliament House while we were at dinner. Most of us went to the balcony to watch. The street below us, the street across the square from us, the street which passed the parliament were all a mass of marchers from curb to curb carrying banners and flags and shouting slogans I could not understand. The tone was one of anger, and yet the crowd remained orderly. It was not a mob. The waiters were standing among the tables awaiting the hotel guests' return to their seats. I stepped back to ask one of them if he knew what it was about and if Makarios were involved. He almost grinned as he said, "Not Bishop Makarios; we all love him." He then told me that if I stayed in Athens long, I

Bird: would see similar demonstrations frequently. They would be orderly. After the speeches at the door of parliament, flags and banners would be furled and the demonstrators would disperse quietly and go home.

I saw other demonstrations almost every night of my ten day stay. They followed the same pattern except for the size and shouting of the crowd. Each was about some pending issue. It occurred to me that this was just a more direct and noisier way of telling their representatives in government what we try to tell ours with a barrage of letters and telegrams.

After Greece, I went to Italy for several days in Rome and Venice and a few in Milan, but it was Florence which summoned me. Because of the museums and its Medici history and the lovely churches and countryside, but most of all because one of my dearest friends lived there, Margherita Langer-Chiari. We had become friends through Edna and Porter Garnett. After their deaths, we became closer in spirit but further apart geographically; for she had returned to Florence following the death of her husband, Dr. Heinz Langer, in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. She had come to California a few times, and I had gone to Florence twice.

I can remember that the Garnetts had said of her that she, more than any one they knew, possessed "charm." They used her as a touchstone by which to measure the charm of others because of its purity in her. Let me say then that she was a beautiful woman possessed of charm and grace, warmly sympathetic, and merry of heart. She had had great sorrow in the deaths of Heinz and members of her family. This had softened her love of laughter but not stilled it. Her home on the Arno about a block from Ponte Vecchio reflected her in its many objects of beauty and its sense of serenity.

In Florence, I ran across Bakersfield friends, Mr. and Mrs. Wylie Jones. Mr. Jones was on the faculty at Bakersfield College. I met them first in Rome, and that evening we had dinner together at Meo Patacca across the river. The next day we went together to the Keats-Shelley Museum at the foot of the Spanish Steps. There I found that the museum director, Mrs. Cacciatore (Vera, not chicken) had just published a little book on Shelley. I purchased one and asked if she would consent to inscribing it to Bakersfield College. She did, and into the mail it went. The Joneses and I agreed to meet in Florence. We had tea and cocktails at Margherita's, and I was hostess to all of us including Leonid Tichvinsky, who was visiting Margherita from Gottingen, at Sabbatini's. Fun!

My time with my dear friend was beginning to run low. We had had every evening together and most or part of every day. I had visited the Uffizi Gallery alone twice. Together we had shopped for knit suits at Amati's and gifts at Peruzzi's on Ponte Vecchio. We had

Bird: walked miles through the city to look at its treasure. Now on my last day, I wanted to go again to Santa Croce where I needed to think about our enormous debt as civilized people to the men whose tombs are there: Michelangelo, Dante, Rossini, Galileo.

There was a heavy rain falling so I took a cab and paid the driver to wait for me. When I left the church, however, there was no cab anywhere, but there was lots of water everywhere. I slogged my way back almost to the center of town before I could hail a cab. Outwardly soaked, I was warm inside by my thoughts of the artist, the writer, the composer, the scientist at whose tombs I had just called. When I reached the hotel, there was a message for me saying Margherita and Leonid would join me at dinner. It would be my last evening with them before flying to Venice in the morning. I looked out my window before complete darkness came across the roofs at Brunelleschi's beautifully proportioned dome on the cathedral and Giotto's tower. Here were two other old acquaintances since the days of Architecture 5, and also since my stay in that same room before.

I left the next morning for Venice. Venice is a city that has come out of the sea to show herself to painters. It has a light that will never leave the mind's eye. I saw that suffusing light even in the rain one day, and I wondered if this was what bewitched Guardi. If Venice is a city you have not yet visited, Balda, then taste her in the paintings of Guardi and Canaletto (even in reproduction), then pack your bags as quickly as you can.

I spent one day in Milan. In my previous visit there, I was ill and had no visit to La Scala or the Museo de Teatro. I wanted particularly to see manuscripts of operas composed by Verdi and Puccini who have given me a whole life of pleasure. There was so much more than I had assumed that I asked my driver-guide for more than an hour longer. Seeing an original painting or manuscript has, I think, a far greater value than a reproduction. Yet unless I know it is an original, I doubt that I could distinguish it from an excellent fake. It is only in the knowing, therefore, that, for example, it was actually Verdi's hand and imagination that brought those marks to the paper, bar by bar, movement by movement, that let me feel close to the creative mind and heart of the composer. And then, what a feeling!

I left that night for two cities I had never visited before, Geneva and Amsterdam. I found a sharp contrast. Even more than I had anticipated. Geneva rests in a nest of mountains at the tip of a lake that bears its name. Amsterdam's wide flat plain is edged by an arm of the intrusive sea. In the evening from my eleventh floor window it looked like an enormous carpet pinned down by a hundred slender church spires.

Bird: Geneva, of course, was all hills except for the roads and quais bordering the lake and the Rhone as it divides the city. I stayed at the Intercontinental Hotel on one of the highest hills and looked down on the park with the lovely old dusty green League of Nations Building and the new United Nations quarters. My only view of the ever white Mont Blanc was when my plane rose above the clouds. I felt my pulse beat to the end of my finger tips.

I stayed at Geneva only into the third day. I took the "comprehensive tour" the first day, and I walked down the steep hill to make my visit to the U.N. and old League of Nations buildings. My general impressions? Magnificence of setting and great seemliness everywhere--parks, streets, home gardens, hotel grounds all immaculate. A sense of culture and civilized tolerance. Flowers all about one and a sense of repose coupled with privacy and great reserve.

Amsterdam in contrast never seemed to suggest repose. Its streets were always full of people on bicycles. One meets young riders everywhere in cities and villages and on the road. Their bicycles are parked by the score outside the Rijksmuseum. Let me pause a minute to say that I think the Rijksmuseum is surely one of the great museums of the western world. My several hours there were far too few.

The people whom I met were knowledgeable and friendly, but I had less association with them because of my short stay. Still my name had been given me to echo that of my great grandmother whose Van Dyke family had settled in America in the Seventeenth Century.

I had a motor car and driver. We made the tour de ville in the morning seeing such places as Rembrandt's house in which he lived most of his life, the Weeping Tower from which Henry Hudson set out for the Atlantic in his "Half Moon," the Old Quarter with its Sixteenth Century houses too many of which are sinking in the mud. And, of course, government buildings, guild halls, squares, modern houses, and the like. Another day I was driven to a cheese farm and then on to Volendam by the Zuyder Zee.

Amsterdam is as convention-conscious as San Francisco. There were six conventions during my short stay.

The flight from Amsterdam to London was a short one, and I was soon in my hotel. Now lovers of our home city of St. Francis make much of the claim that San Francisco is everybody's favorite second city. That is my feeling about London. I think of it as my second city.

I know some of the reasons. One is that it is the heart of England, and England gave us Magna Carta. Another is that there is a higher decency between man and man of every class in London than in any city

Bird: I have ever visited. It is as if "Noblesse Oblige" had become "Decency Obliges." I hope its low-minded youth do not blight it. And London has a great heritage of vigorous and beautiful use of the English language.

I came to see three friends: one who made her home in London, Mildred Ritchie; and two who were my professional associates, Ada Nisbet of the English Department of the University of California, Los Angeles, and Ruth Maguire, a counselor at Bakersfield College. Mildred Ritchie and I had been friends for more than forty years. We shared romantic ideals and a disposition toward laughter in our early years. No matter how long our separation, both of these would come up from the waters of the past to remind us of happy hours whenever we were together. We also believed in "quality" and tried to give the least important act a touch of it. We had luncheon together on the day I reached London at the English Speaking Union. Another day it was tea at her apartment on Gloucester Place. And so on through four meetings of talk and laughter. She keeps her American citizenship, but she has come to feel more at home with her English friends.

Ada Nisbet

Bird: Dr. Ada Nisbet is a true Dickensian in heart as well as scholarship. She wrote the carefully researched and sympathetic book on Dickens and Ellen Ternan which was published by the University of California Press in 1952. I think her definitive bibliography of writings about Charles Dickens is soon to be published. She is a recognized authority. In addition to her virtue of enviable scholarliness, she is an attractive woman who is instinctively generous and affectionate. She and Ruth Maguire were both in England doing research at the matchless British Museum: Ada on her bibliography; Ruth on her doctoral dissertation. But we had many hours together for all that.

One evening, for example, when we were having cocktails before dinner at my hotel, our minds, if not our bodies, stood up at attention when Prime Minister Heath joined a white tie and tails party in a nearby room. Another evening we dined at the Black Angus and saw the Pickwick Room before going to see the Royal Ballet dance Cappelia at Covent Garden. A luncheon at Cheshire Cheese brought us a short walk to visit Samuel Johnson's House, and, after an early luncheon on another day, we went with Philip Gilbert to visit Kew and the Royal Botanical Gardens. Mr. Gilbert was a young actor who was playing the leading role in a very satisfying performance in the Richmond Theater of Mary, Mary by, I think, Jean Kerr. We were his guests, and we saw him win standing applause from the audience. Ada Nisbet was encouraging his career.

Bird: When I wasn't with friends I was spending time at the galleries especially the Victoria and Albert, a source of continuous delight with the arts of East and West before me.

Best of all for me was to spend several hours in the British Museum. I went at every break between engagements. The manuscript room surpasses a diamond mine in wealth, and it is wealth of the mind. Here are works of men's minds and imagination spanning four thousand years. Here one could learn to belong to all places and all times.

After ten fulfilling days in London and about six weeks earlier travel, I returned home to resume work on my projects.

Other Projects

Bird: I wished to complete my research for my story of the Bird family and of the background of the families of the women whom they married. That was to have been the first major claim on my time; but I also wanted to prepare memoranda explanatory of certain items in the Porter Garnett archive whose meaning might not otherwise be understood. So I began to spend a great many hours in the Oakland Genealogical Library and in the stacks of the Doe Library on the Berkeley campus of the university. And I spent several hours in the Bancroft Library.

RS: You have told us that you finished the projects on your family and posted the results in 1966 and 1971. What about the Garnett archive?

Bird: [Laughing] I suppose I might contribute bits and pieces for sometime to come if good health and energy persist, but I have begun to falter a little, and my project about my grandmother Lapish's life has not gone beyond research notes.

A Gift of Books to the Grace Van Dyke Bird Library

Bird: One thing I had been wanting to do was to give my books to the library which bears my name at Bakersfield College. Sentiment kept saying, "Not yet, please." In 1966, however, the wish to share with old friends and young students the pleasures I had had from knowing these between-book-covers-companions won out. I sent some seven hundred books that year. I had been giving books to the college library during many years--perhaps more than fifty just this year.

RS: Could you estimate how many in all?

Bird: Probably a thousand. One thousand books is not a large number except when one thinks of books as friends. My taste in reading is varied, and I think the collection might give pleasure to a wider audience than otherwise. Here were books on art, science, gastronomy, religion, architecture, philosophy, drama, archaeology; you catalog it.

Christmas Poems for Christmas Friends

Bird: Although I never thought of the practice as a project, my retirement gave me time to write a Christmas verse for my many friends. Whatever card I selected suggested some meaning to me in terms of Christmas. A great-niece of mine sent me my reward one year when she wrote, "Your card is the best gift you could send me because you are sending yourself."

RS: How long have you been writing your own poem for Christmas?

Bird: Since 1961. I had retired December 1960.

A Trip to Our East Coast Fall 1965

Bird: I made a trip to our East coast in 1965 that became memorable to me since it turned out to be the last time I saw two friends who had become very dear to me: Elizabeth Mellon Sellers (Mrs. John B.S. Sellers) of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Frederick Mortimer Clapp of New York City. As had been the case with Margherita Langer-Chiari, I had met both these friends through Edna and Porter Garnett. Our friendships were at first reflected ones but they became real and enduring.

I went directly to Elizabeth Sellers--well hardly directly since I left San Francisco by plane at 9 a.m. and arrived at Pittsburgh after midnight. The trip had been full of comic hazards on take-off and in Chicago. The Sellers had been taking turns driving to the airport having been told half a dozen different hours for my plane's arrival on an airline none of us had ever heard of before, Northwest Orient.

Let me introduce you to Elizabeth Mellon Sellers; for she was a rare person.





*"The bird of dawning singeth
all night long"*

MARCELLUS IN HAMLET

Rhyming Freely for My Friends at Christmas Time

Were I to choose as talisman a bird,
Would it be the lark
Whose song at Heaven's Gate
Will Shakespeare heard?

Would it be the robin, that democratic creature,
Whose red breast is spring's feature
In everybody's garden?
Would it be the owl, Night's faithful warden?

Would it be the migratory quail
Whom the Hebrews called selav,
Or the nightingale
Or thrush or dove?

Let it be all birds; for it is they who brought
Song to earth
Before the birth
Of man.

With affection ever

Grace Bird,

who now sends greetings for this Christmas and all your
Christmases to come with a song of gratitude for your many
kindnesses to me and with ever happy memories of those
kindnesses and your other acts of friendship.



*This card represents
a gift to the
American Cancer Society*



*Where are all the unremembered things?
Where have they gone?
That sound, like a word caressed,
Was it a flute? a neighbor singing? the bells of St. Clement's?
That touch, softer than a pansy petal,
Was it for heart's ease, or a passing stranger's gift of goodwill?
That thought like the contrail of a dream
Absorbed by its own blue sky—
Unremembered, yes; lost, no.
Though unrecalled, their essence is now part of me.*

*Christmas celebrates the remembered
And opens wide my door.
My house grows more luminous than its great bowl of poppies;
For you stand at its threshold.*

GRACE BIRD

Bird: I first met Mrs. Sellers (nickname "Lib") in the late thirties when she made her first visit to the Garnetts at Rancho Mallacomes in Sonoma County. I spent about ten days with them while she was there. It was the beginning of a friendship which lasted until her death in January 1973. She was a very private person and outwardly reserved yet her generosity extended in all directions. She was what the press usually calls a civic and cultural leader, but she was so much more than this.

Her interest in fine arts led her to found a women's committee for the Carnegie-Mellon University Museum. Her interest in gardens and gardening as part of civilized living made her chairman of the Allegheny County Garden Club, while her delight in the birds which visited her own garden led her to edit "Birds of Western Pennsylvania." Matching her love of the living nature around her was her sense of urgency to save the best of the past in her city's history. She was on the board of the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation and was associate editor of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine.

She was so loving and desirous of sharing special joys, even little ones, with her friends. I recall that her telephone call one evening told me the bed of lilies of the valley was in bloom and there were two orioles and a scarlet tanager visiting their garden, and couldn't I pack a bag and fly over to Pittsburgh to enjoy them. And another day when she knew I was to be in Chicago for a weekend at the Palmer House, she made arrangements for us to have connecting rooms as a surprise. The registration desk cooperated in the secret, and I knew nothing about it until the room clerk unlocked the door and Lib stood there chuckling with delight.

To her close friends she wrote letters so full of charm and affection, I kept mine year by year. I recall many lines that are characteristic of her letters to me. Here is one: "It is icy cold now, and the chickadees and titmice live on the window shelf and make their plaintive queries; titmice sound like mocking birds, did you know?"

And another I recall because it came in a letter--when it was also cold: "It's still cold. No real spring. The cherry blossoms shake their pink puffs in disbelief at the chilly wind." It is this sort of delightful reading that prompted me to save her letters over thirty years to give to her son, Johnny, when he reached twenty-one. Death cancelled that; for Johnny was killed in a motor accident while enroute from Yale, where he was a senior, to Pittsburgh to celebrate his mother's birthday.

After leaving Pittsburgh, I went to Washington, D.C. to spend a few days with the David Sinclair family. I have already told you of trying to see this nephew and his attractive family at each base of his duty. His home was in Bethesda, but we drove down to

Bird: Mrs. Clapp (Maud) directed the hospital while Dr. Clapp ("Tim") served in military intelligence. Both were linguists. My first gift from them via the Garnetts was Maud's story of "A Green Tent in Flanders."

Back in America Dr. Clapp became head of the University of Pittsburgh's Fine Arts Department, and early in the thirties he became director of the Frick Art Collection in New York. His first task was to prepare the Frick home on Fifth Avenue to become an art museum containing paintings, murals, sculptures, porcelains, rugs, furnitures, and objets d'art--all displayed in the rooms and used by the family. It is a most perfect jewel of an art museum. I have visited it many times and always experienced ecstasy, but it is the Clapps who became such dear friends of mine about whom we are talking.

Maud Clapp was a painter and an etcher of skill and charm. I have a black and white photograph of an oil painting she did of her husband in their early days of marriage. I have another photograph of a painting which is of a miniature of Maud Clapp in her twenties. It shows what a very beautiful woman she was. Dr. Clapp sent it to me after she was stricken by an illness from which she never recovered.

RS: The maintenance of these friendships over many years is a tribute to all of you.

Bird: I wouldn't attempt to generalize from my particular case but surely the fact that we were all devoted to the Garnetts and they to us must have been the mortar that held us together--at least at first. And then I think also that friendships that begin with laughter--warm-hearted laughter--have an excellent chance of lasting.

RS: Please tell about Dr. Clapp as a writer.

Bird: I think he had been a scholar in the fine arts all his life; but he was also a creative writer and once said he thought of himself as a poet. I have sent two volumes of his poetry to the library at Bakersfield College written at a thirty-five year interval and further apart in mood and content than even that. At the request of Yale University he wrote his autobiography. I saw him six or more times while this task was in progress and was privileged to read what had been completed. He died a week before Christmas, 1968. He endowed a fellowship in poetry at Yale and left his papers to the archive at Yale. I have kept some of his letters to me.

Sorrow, 1971

Bird: In 1961 my eldest brother, Harold Bird, had died, and in 1971 both of my other brothers, Scott-Elliot Bird and William Clark Bird died within six weeks of one another. There were now fewer stars in my sky. George Bernard Shaw once said of William Archer, "You may lose the man by your death but not by his." I believe this a truth about my brothers and sisters and my mother and father. Although I am the only one of us still living, I shall not have lost them except when I die.

Comfort, 1972

Bird: With characteristic sensitivity, Virginia Rothwell brought my nieces and nephews and their families and two cousins together to celebrate my eightieth birthday at the Easton and Virginia Rothwell Center at Mills College. The party was a surprise to me. I had thought I was the Rothwells' only guest. We were eighteen!

Most touching for me to see was my brother Bill's widow, Louise, and their family, Clark Bird, son; Alice Bird, daughter-in-law; and Gary, grandson. My brother Scott's two sons and their wives were there with the same memories I had. But those memories were loving, and the hearts of all were lifted by laughter and the toasts.

No doubt about the Bird clan enjoying reunions; for the Rothwells were hosts again in 1976 and 1977 celebrating my birthdays at their house in the woods at Inverness. They were both happy parties with nieces and nephews, great-nieces and nephews, and now great-greats. The 1977 celebration included two friends whom I love dearly, Ida Sproul and Charlotte Anne Moore. Birds flew in from Alaska, Newport Beach, Thailand, San Francisco, Sacramento. Whether it was the mass of balloons floating on the ceiling and all through the house with amusing quips lettered on them or just a touch of that old time religion that prompted testimonials. Everyone was moved to speak once or twice or even thrice to boisterous applause.

Riding back to Berkeley I thought once again of something Irwin Edman had said, and that I had borrowed before at such a time of unmarred pleasure: "The meeting of minds and moods is one of the most amiable fruits of human society."

Exciting as my birthday celebrations were, there were two other celebrations after my retirement that meant a great deal to me. In 1964 the class of nineteen fourteen of the Berkeley campus held its

Bird: fiftieth reunion in the Bohemian Club. My classmate and friend of fifty-three years (now sixty-three years), Elmer Shirrell, came up from Santa Barbara and was my escort.

RS: I remember your speaking of Elmer Shirrell as suggesting you go to Bakersfield sixty years ago.

Bird: Yes. Isn't it wonderful to have such an enduring friendship? Another person he suggested going to Bakersfield that same year was Eleanor Jones to whom he was engaged. She, too, was one of my close friends and remained so all her life. We were all young idealists.

The Shirrells' idealism found its outlet through social service and the church. During one of my two day stays with them in Chicago, they received the city's brotherhood award. They moved to Santa Barbara after their retirement. Elmer has served continuously on the Santa Barbara Scholarship Foundation. Since Eleanor's death in 1960, he has established a scholarship in her name to help some student planning to study for the ministry.

Well, to return to my class reunions, when we reached 1974 for our sixtieth this durable friend telephoned from Santa Barbara to say let's go together. To our sorrow if not our surprise, the ranks have grown thinner, but our regard for those classmates who are left has grown greater. So, too, I think, is our appreciation with all our hearts of the truly great institution our alma mater is.

I have often asked myself how could it happen that I have been blessed with friends of such remarkable dimensions. Probably we enjoyed one another at first because of our mutual allegiance to humanism. Without affectation we admired most those things that enhance man's spirit and those people whose minds and acts seek to enlarge our appreciation of things beautiful and good--the ideal of craftsmanship in things done by hand (the perfect cylinder, the perfect cone); the fresh insight into nature; language so right the heart and mind soar with it. We all tried to do things for one another that would brighten our spirits and always tried to respond to another's offering in kind, never the heavy hand; always the light touch from a full heart.

Porter Garnett made a carving to honor each of his closest friends. Each contained an inscription which he thought reflected some individual quality of the person he was addressing. The inscription on the carving for me came from John Masefield. It reads, "The days that make us happy make us wise." Thus he was recognizing my belief in the power of joy, a far, far better teacher than grief or fear.

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